VOGUE

SEP

THE ITALIAN JOB

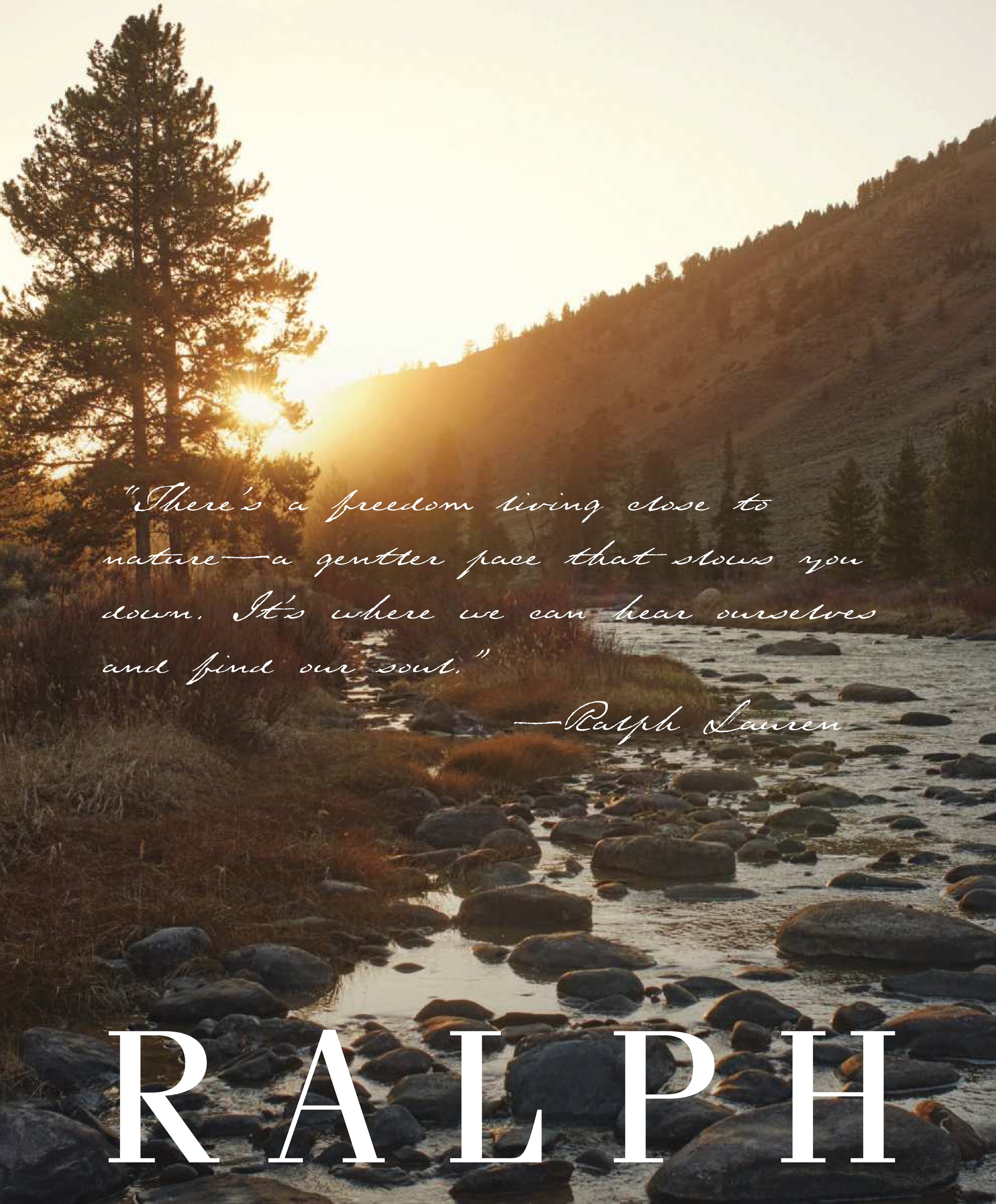
DEMNA IN THE GUCCIVERSE

TRAIN DREAMS

A FASHION FANTASY, STARRING THE BEST OF LONDON'S WEST END

JUST KIDS

KAIA AND HOMER, MAKING THEIR OWN WAY



"There's a freedom living close to nature—a gentler pace that slows you down. It's where we can hear ourselves and find our soul."

—Ralph Lauren

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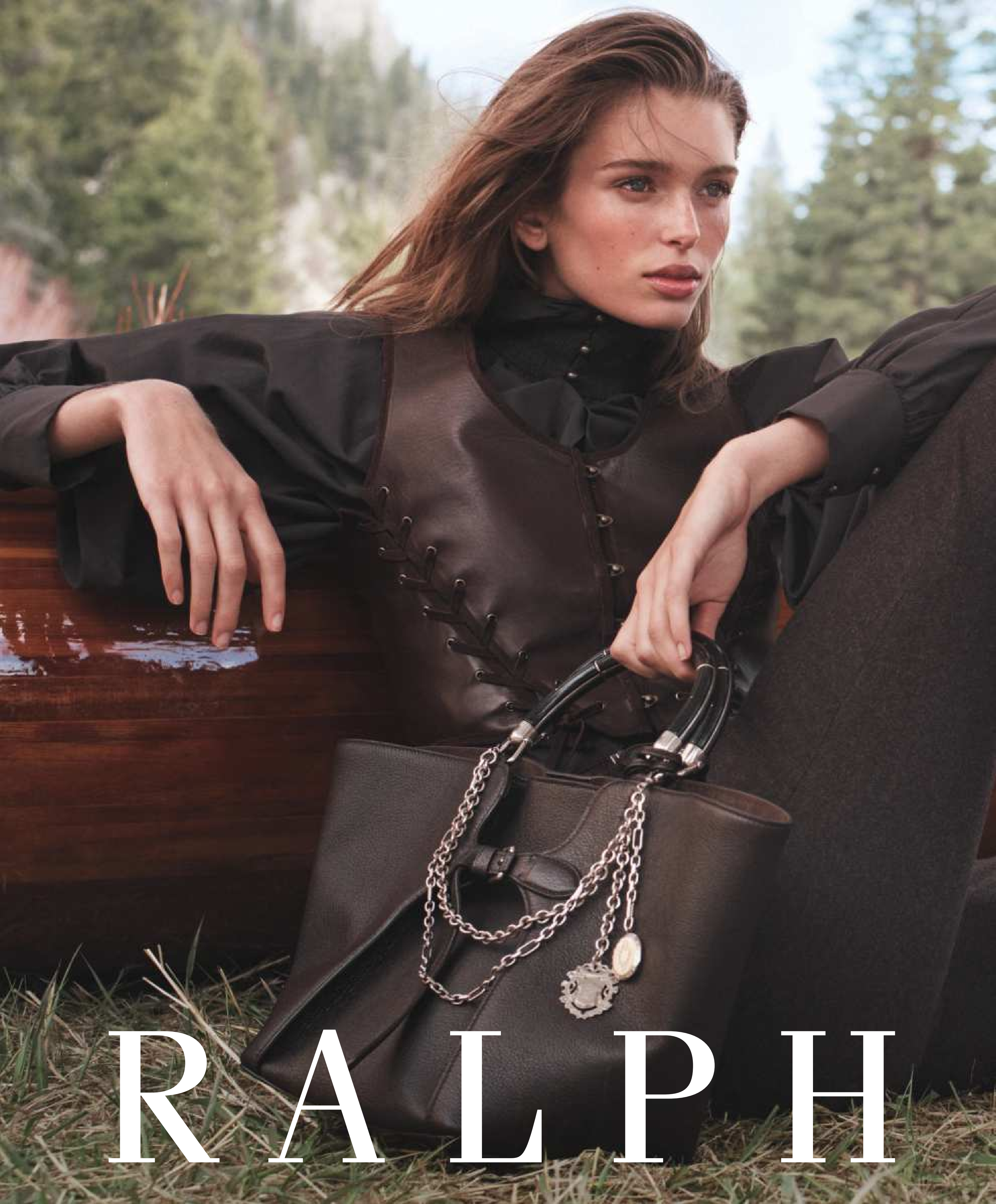
RALPH

LAUREN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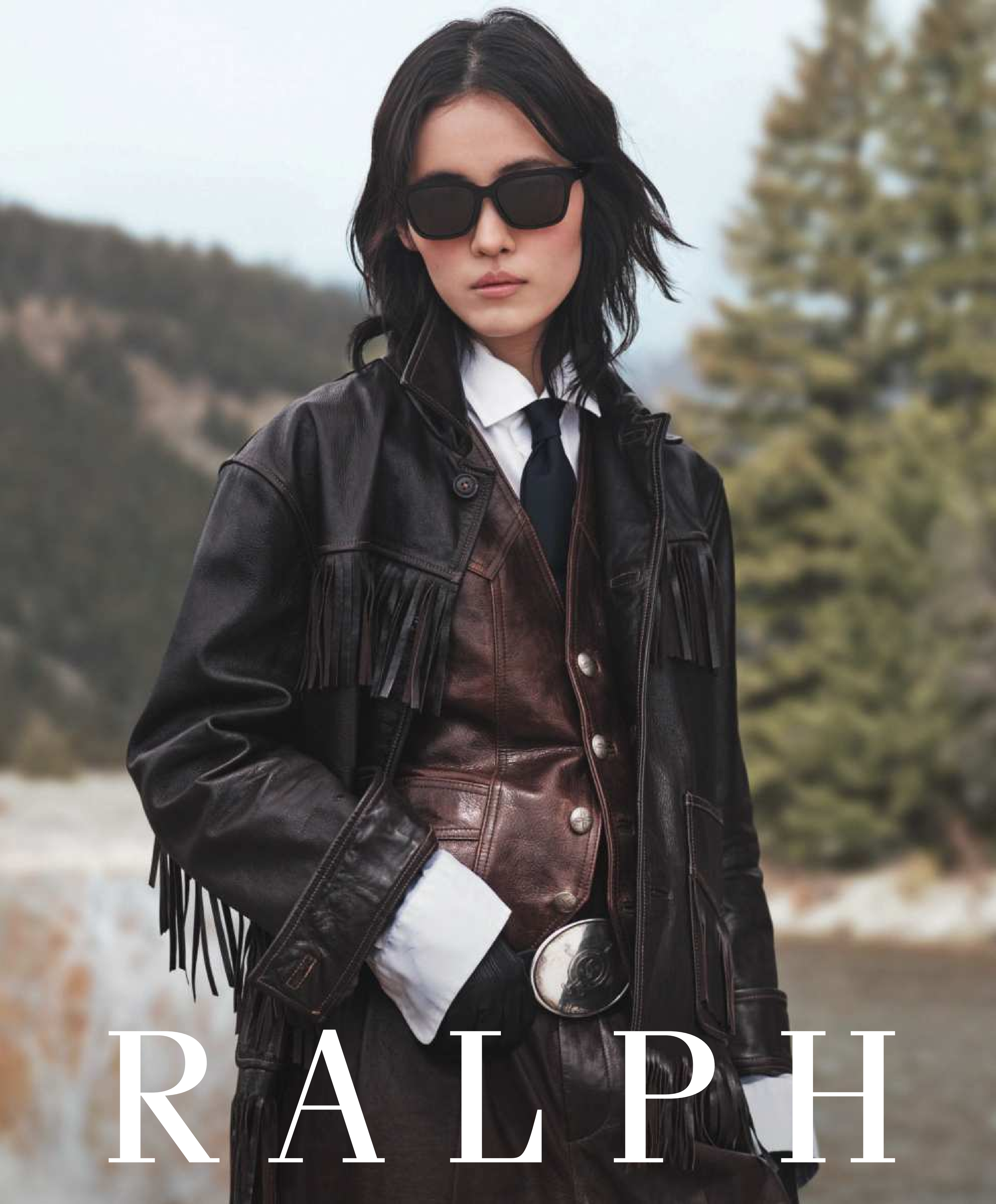
LAUREN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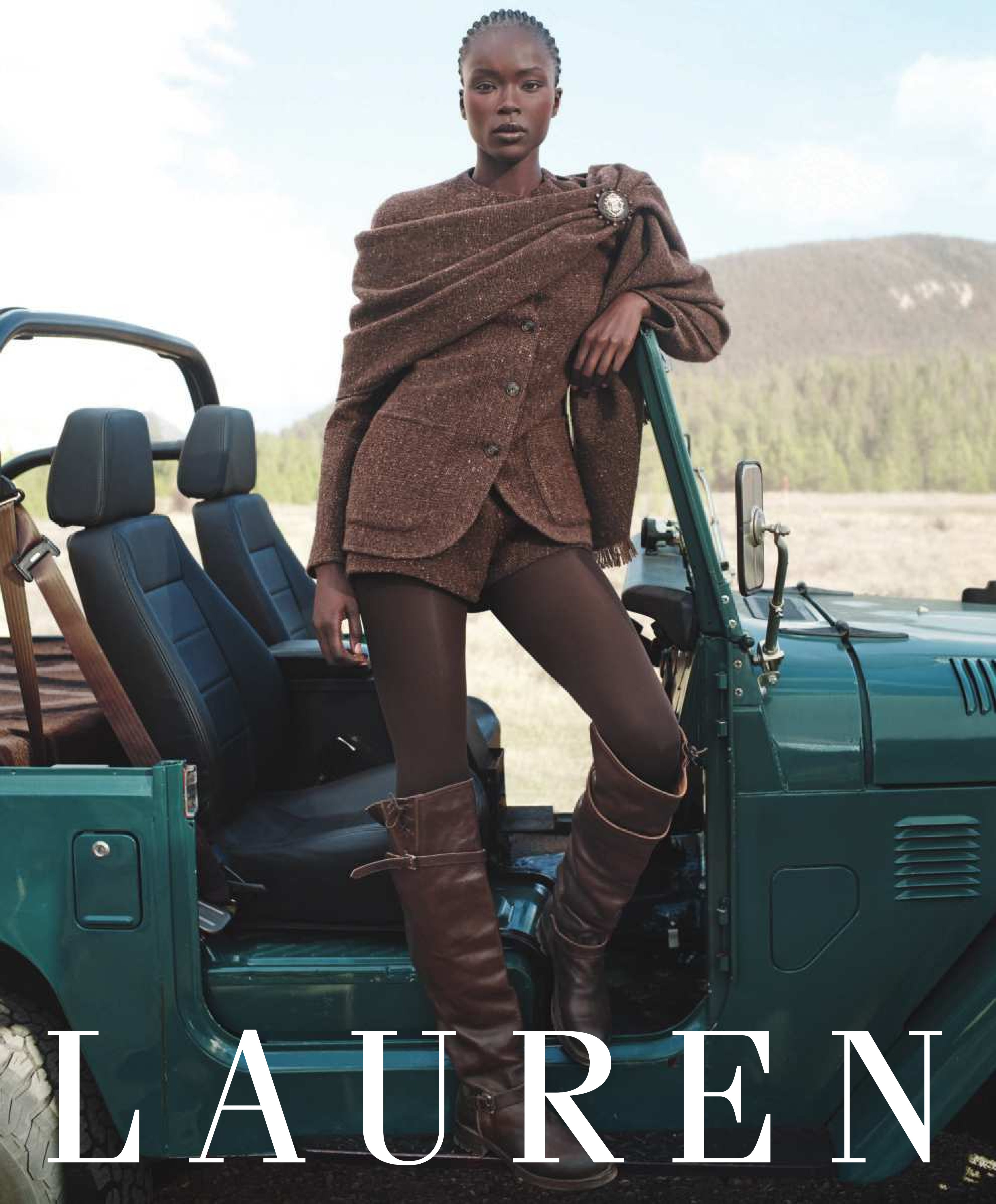
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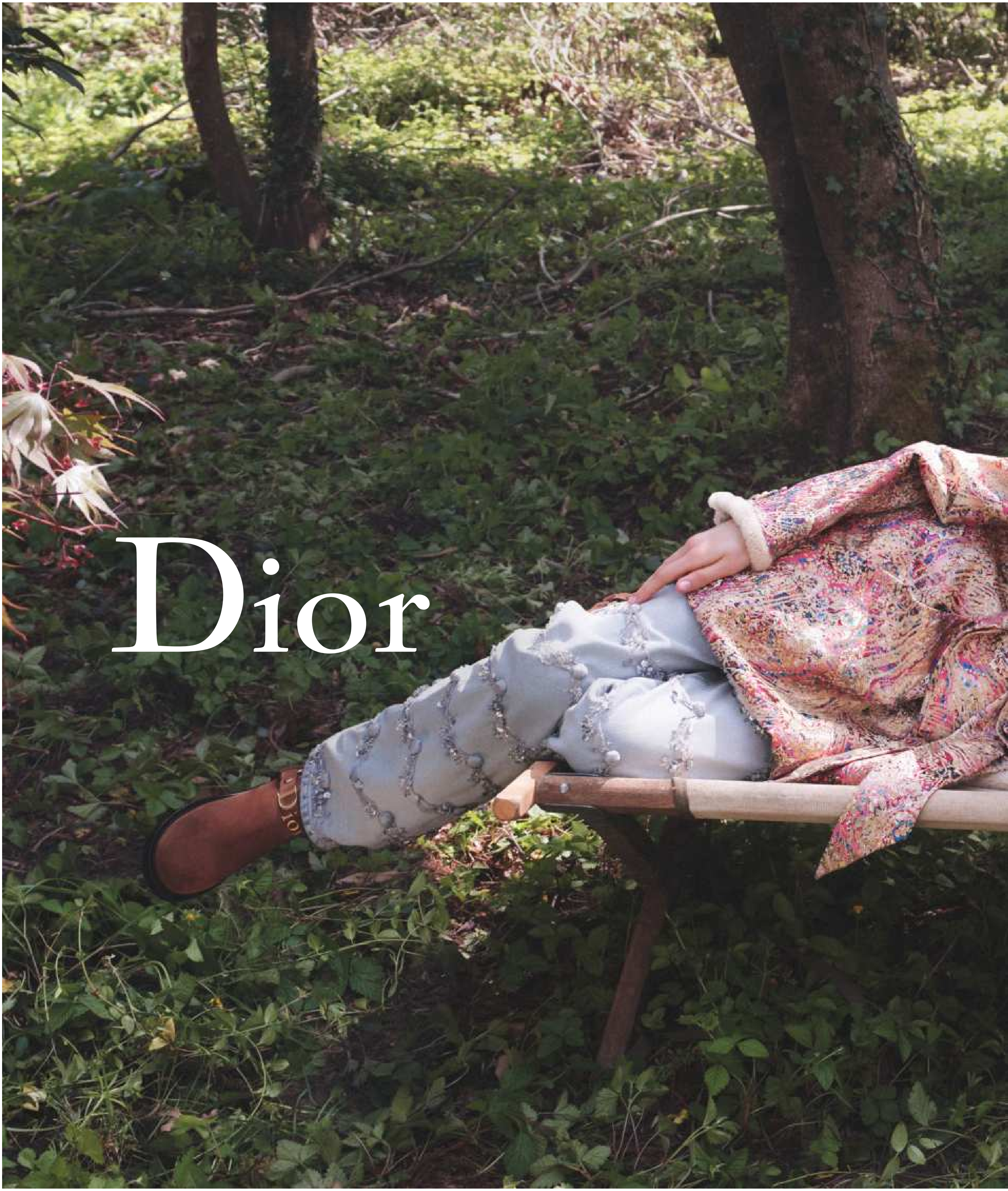
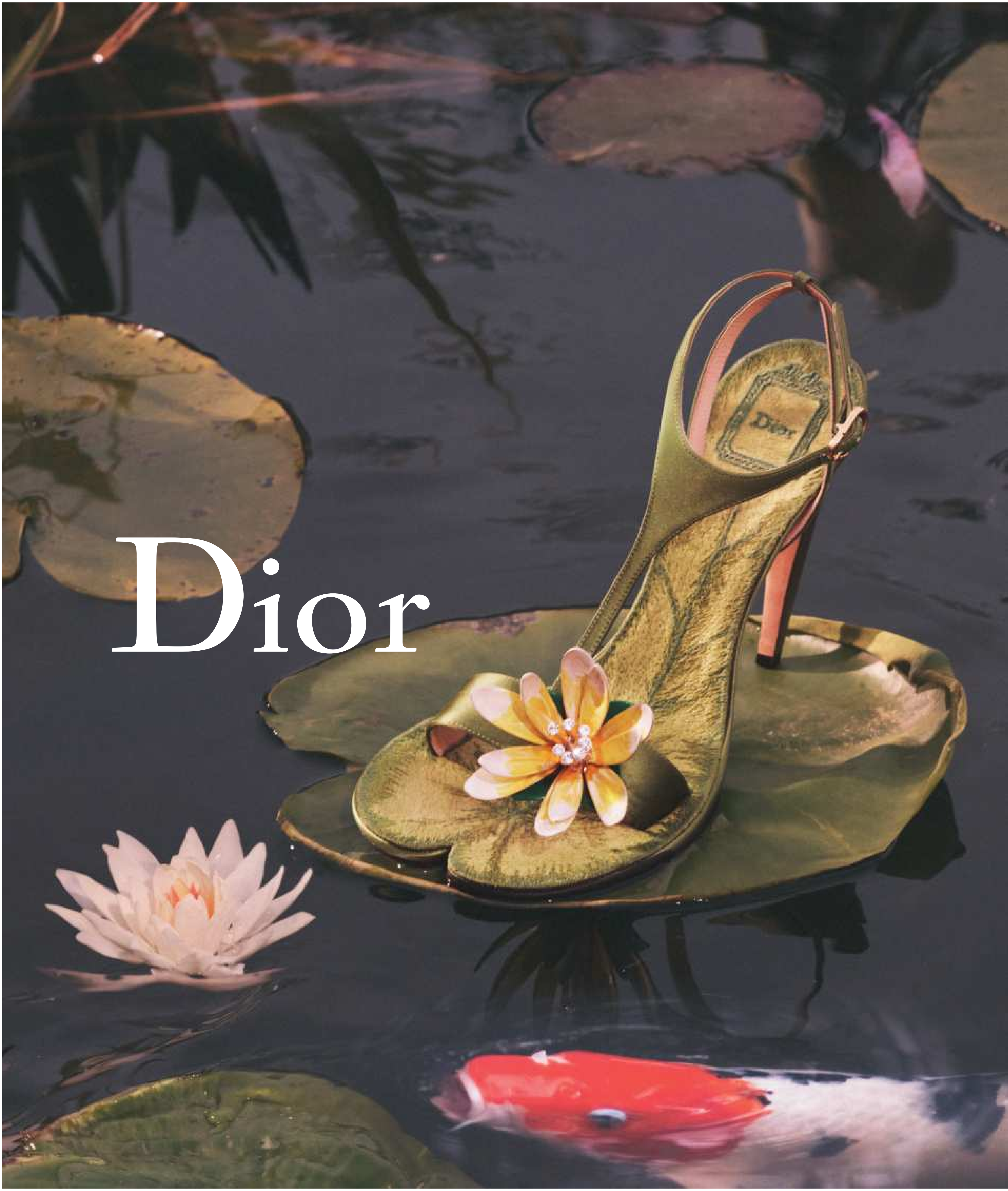


Dior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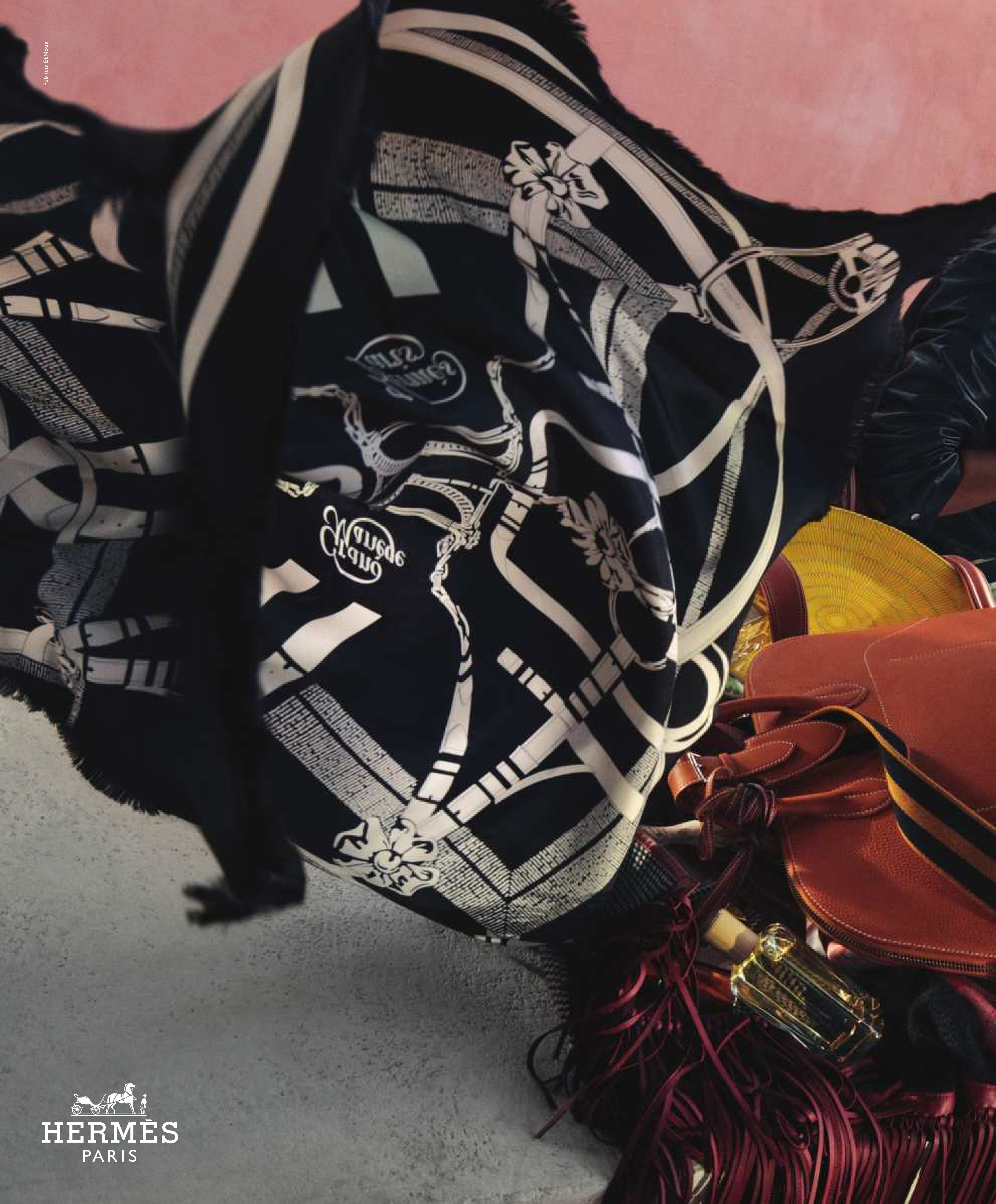
Alex Consani for Gucci Primavera

GUCCI

Shawn Mendes for Gucci Primavera



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PARIS

Hermès, ride on!

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Hermès, ride on!

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DOLCE & GABBANA

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DOLCE & GABBANA

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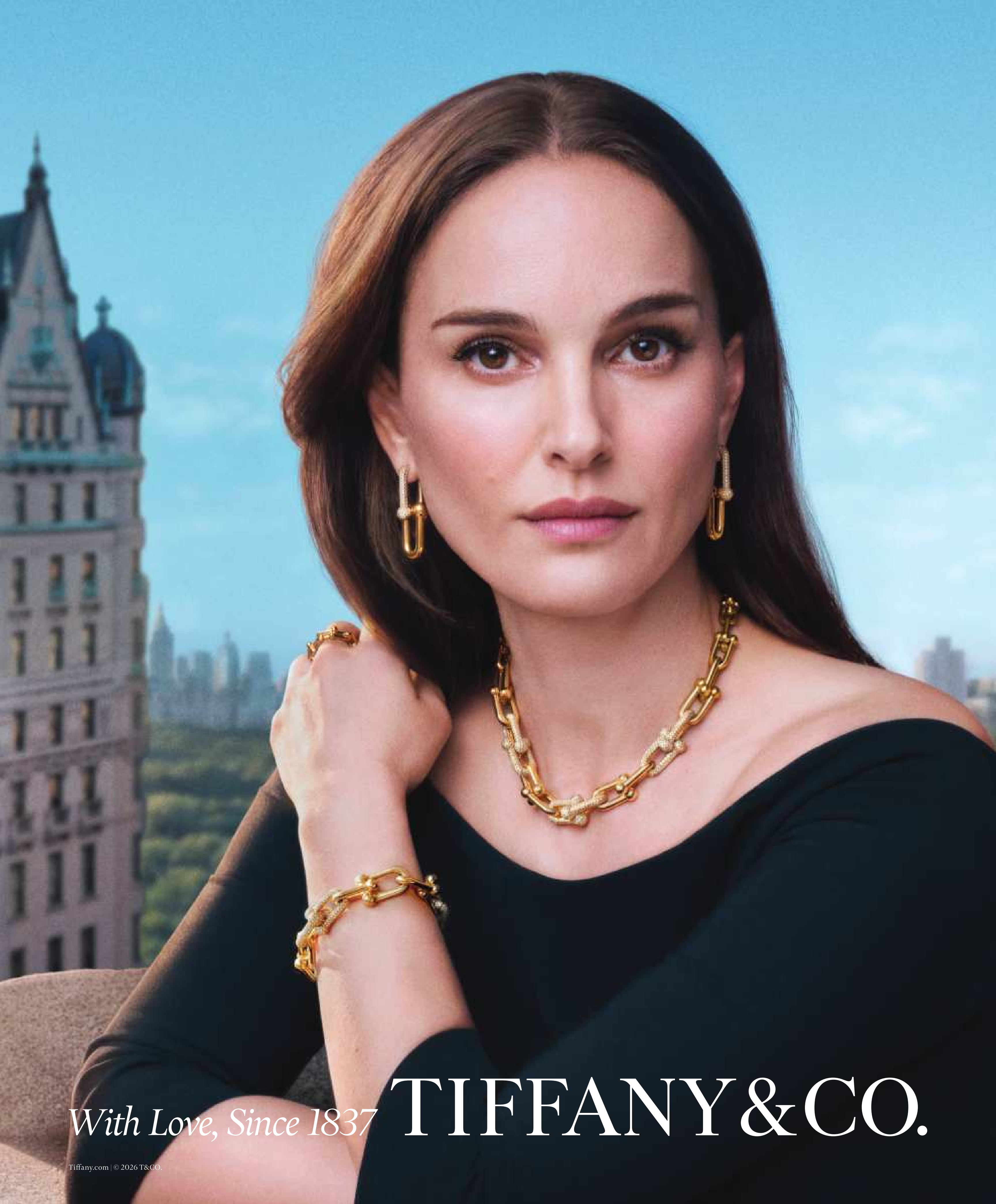
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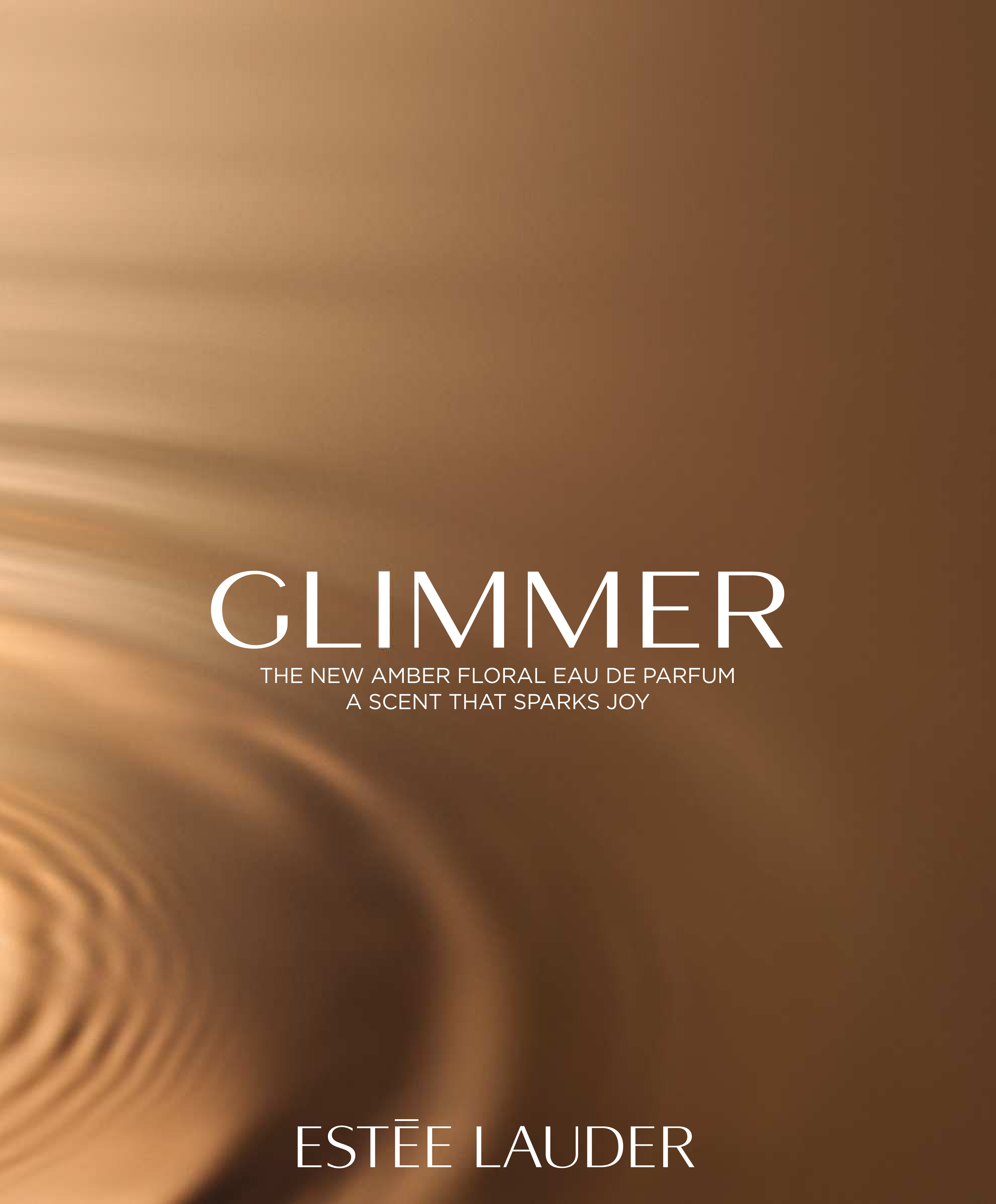

GLIMMER

THE NEW AMBER FLORAL EAU DE PARFUM
A SCENT THAT SPARKS JOY

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HAILEE STEINFELD
GLIMMER
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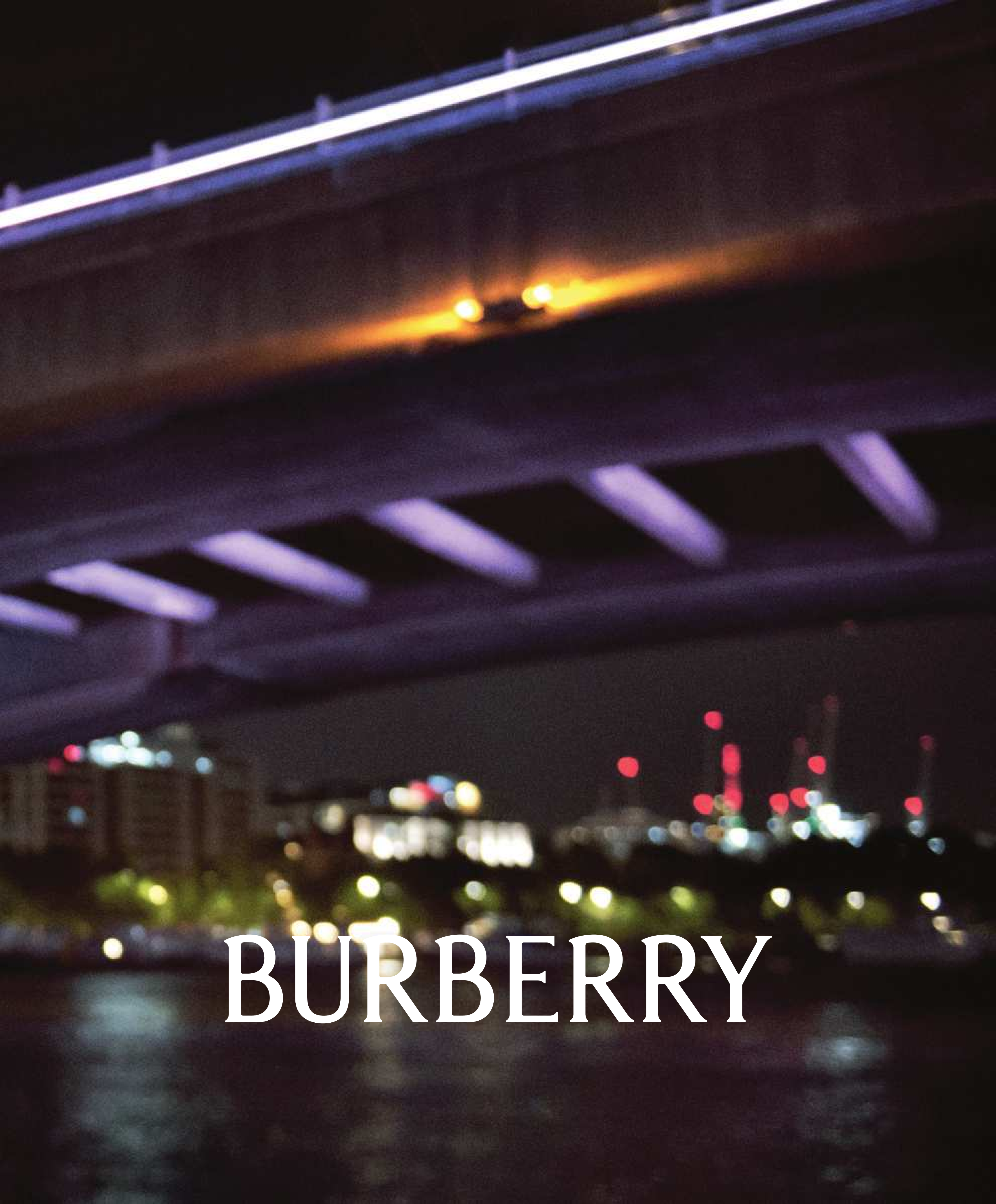
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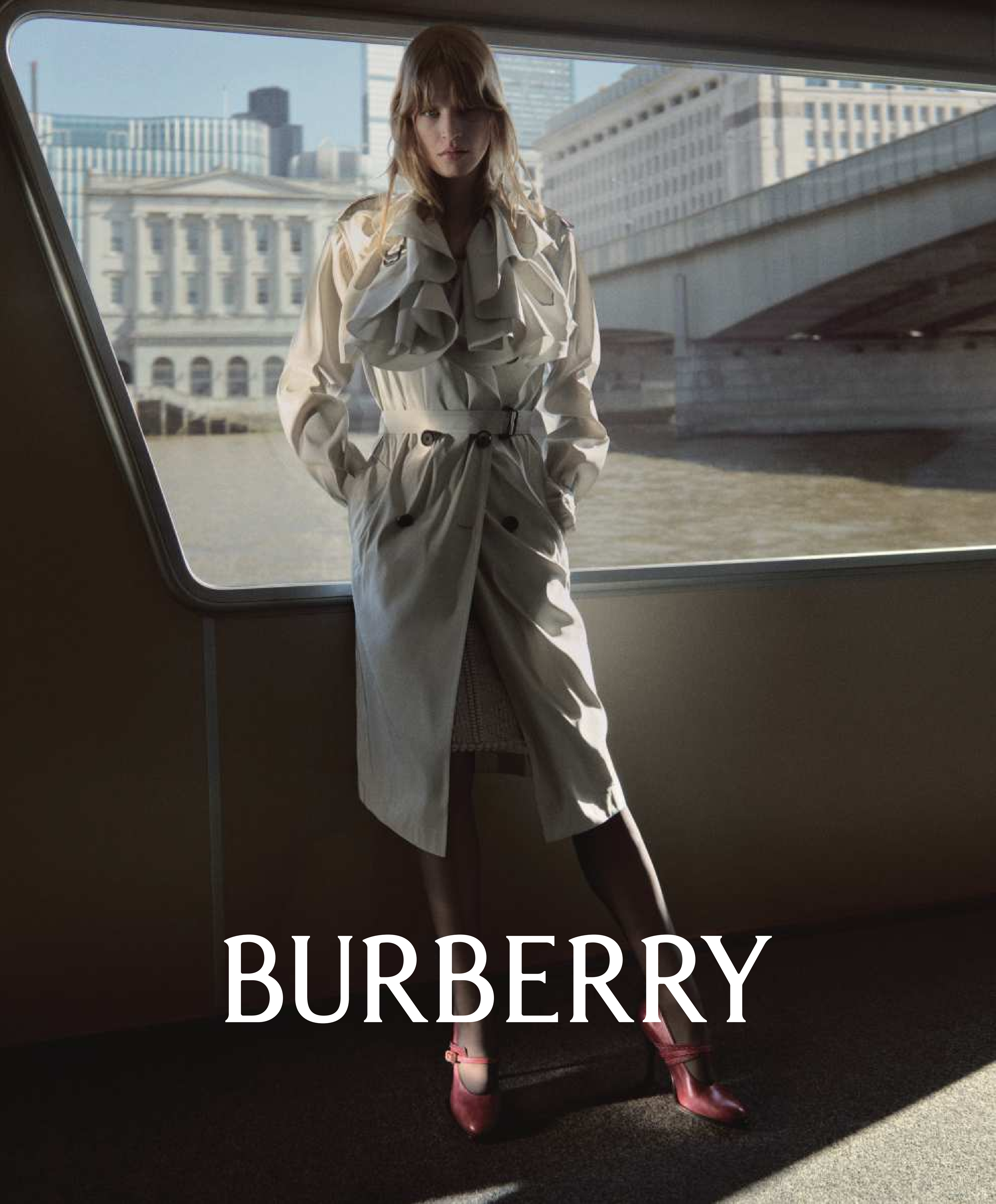
YEARS
B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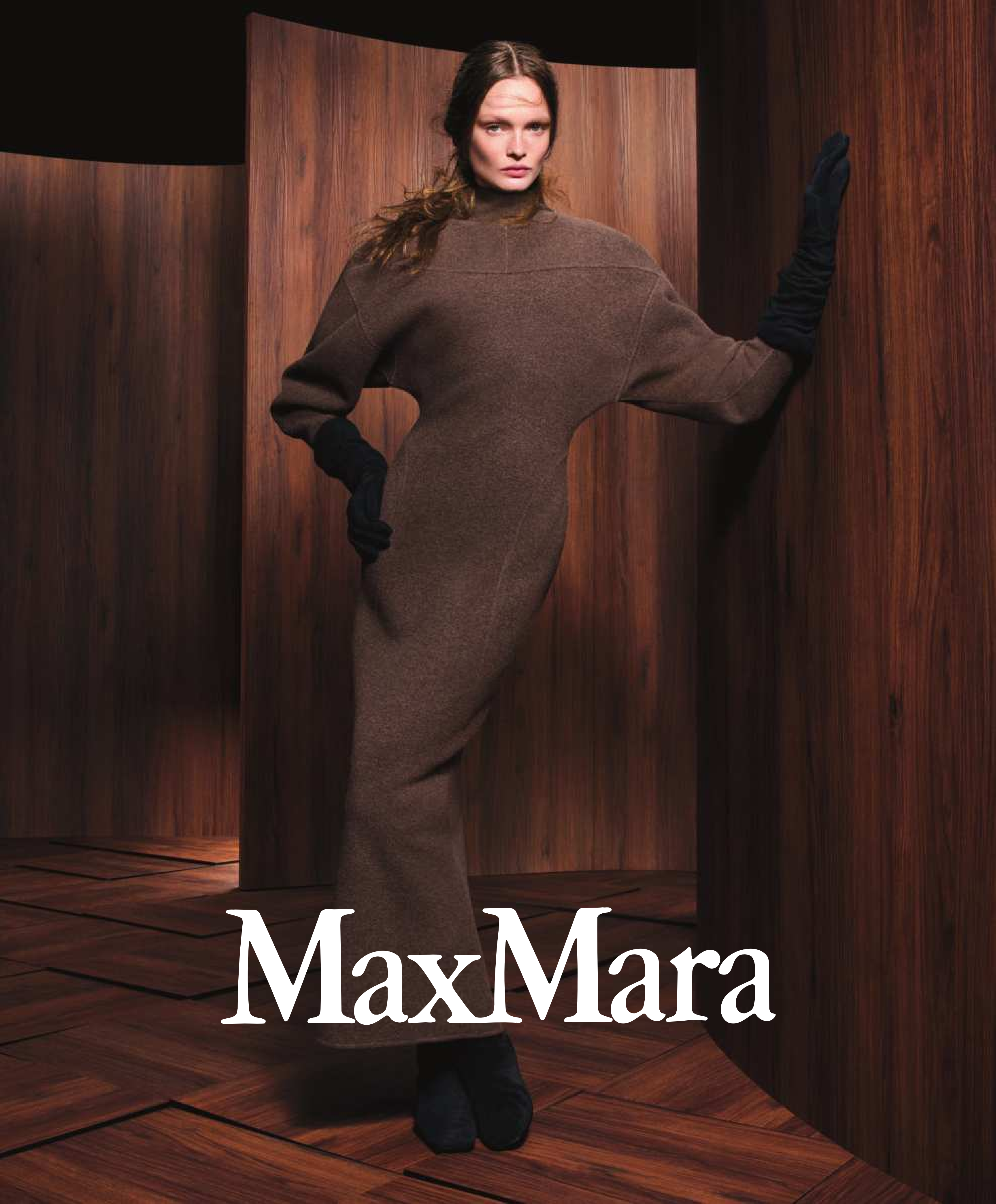
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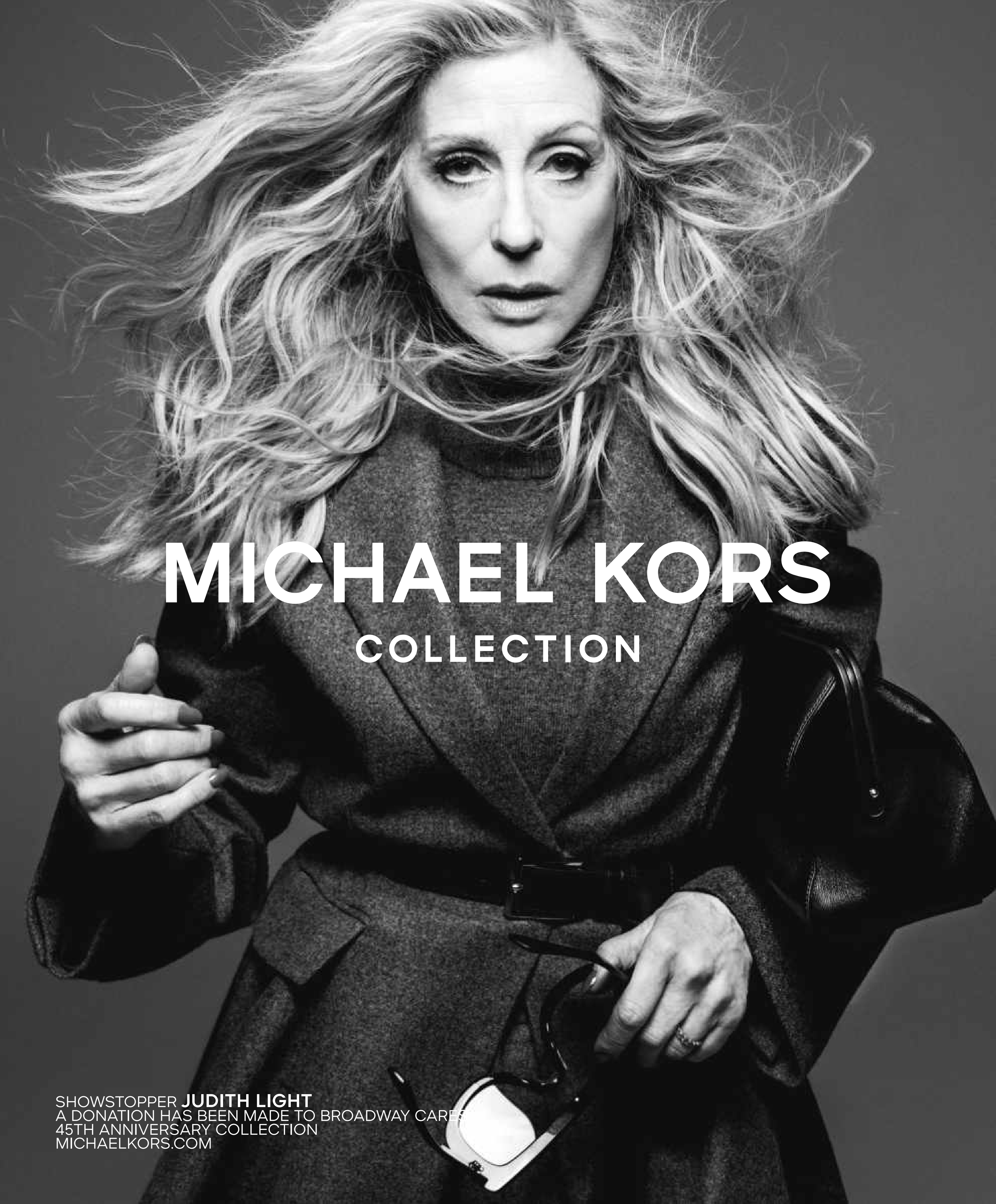

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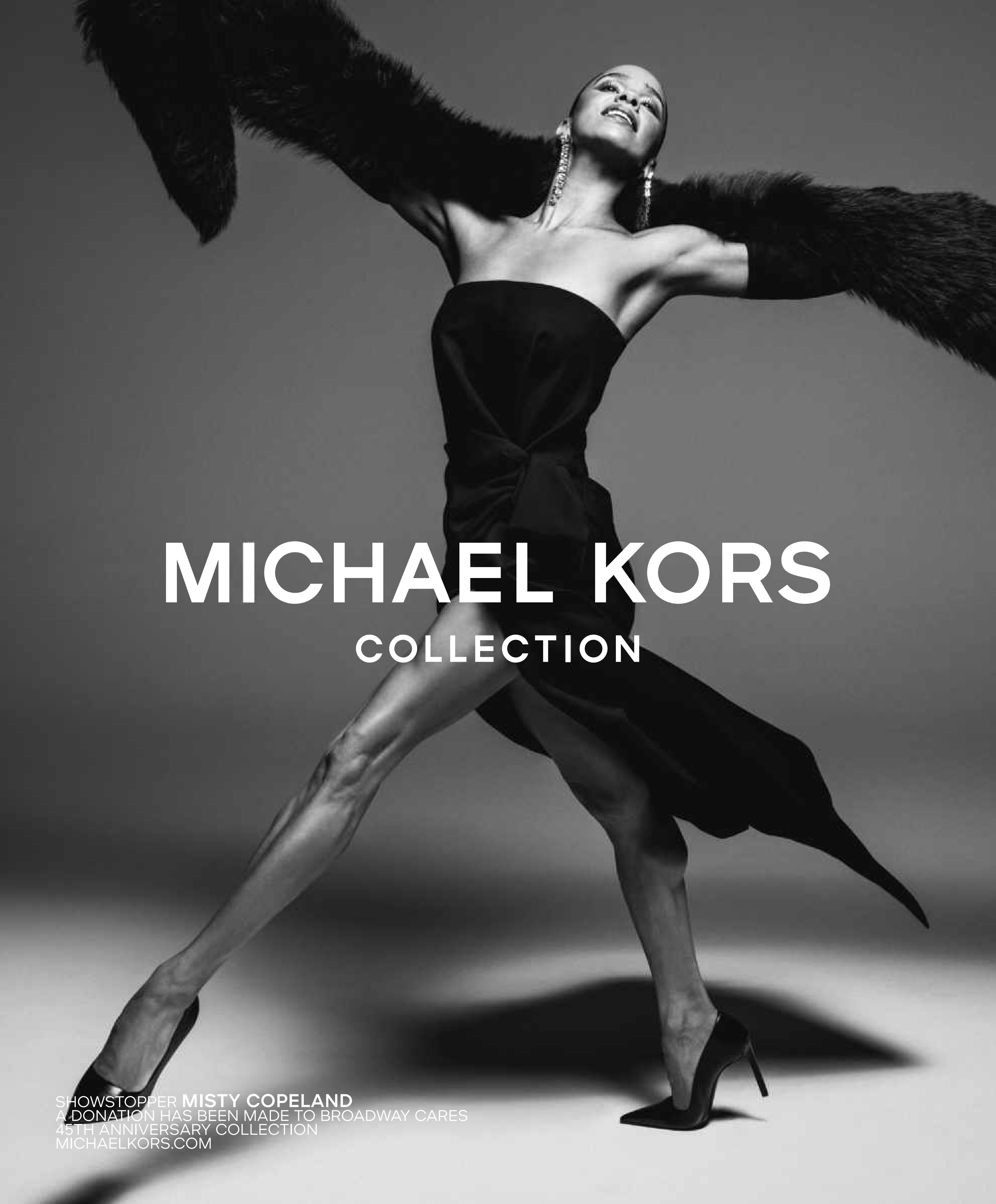

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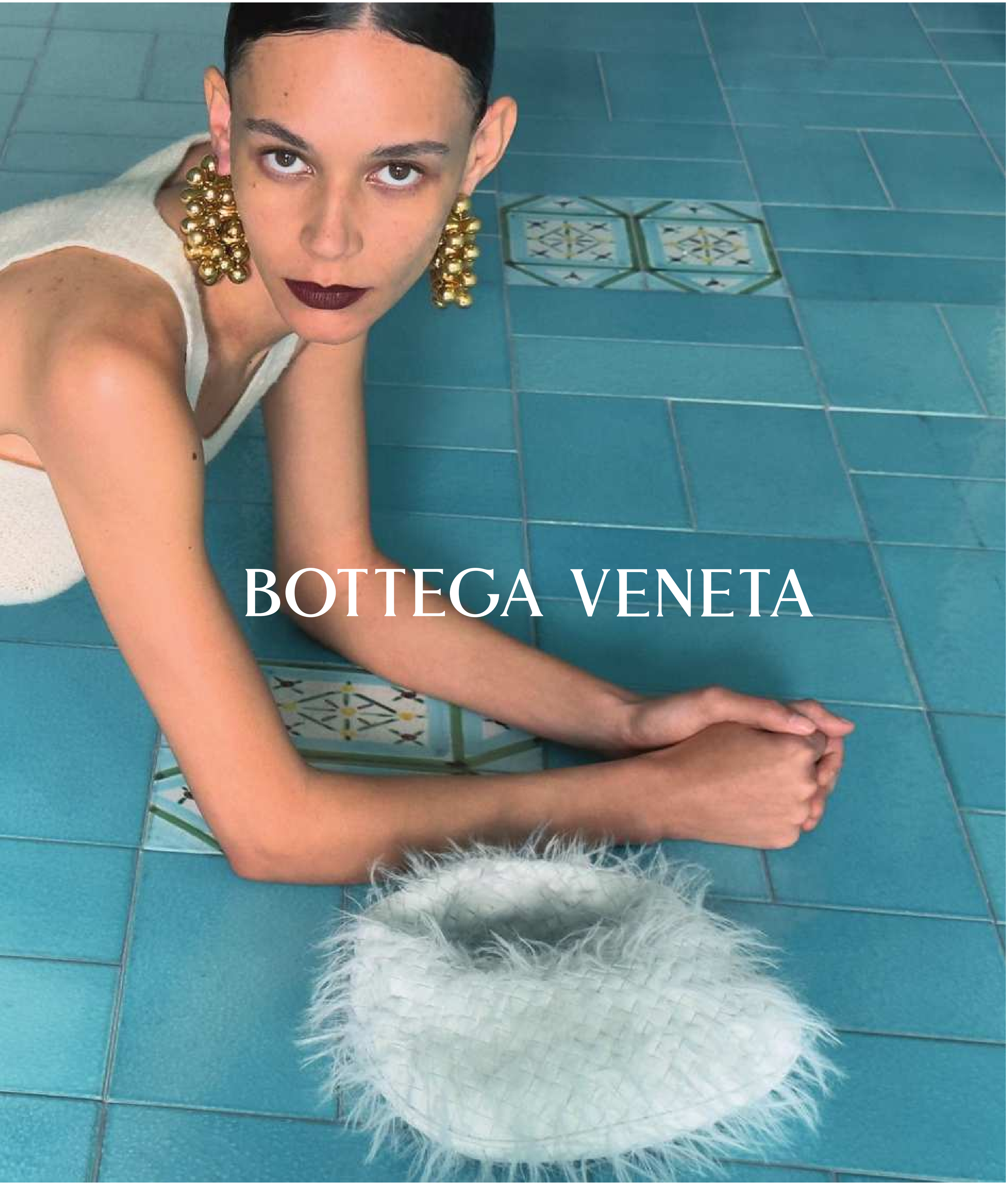
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IN

MONCLER

Let me tell you a story that has never been told.
A story about falling in love.

A story that started when snow met concrete.
Walking the streets side by side, warmer together,
in the coldest of winters.

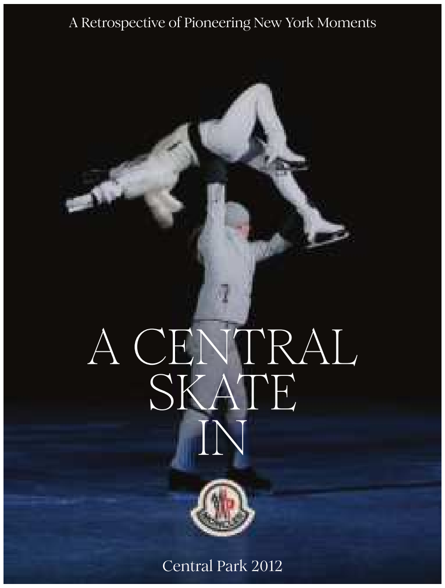
A human connection that grew into a forest in Gotham,
that sparked a flash of inspiration in Grand Central, and scaled
the heights of Midtown mountains.

A story that brought wonder to Central Park,
made dreams a reality at the Rockefeller,
and created art for the sake of love.

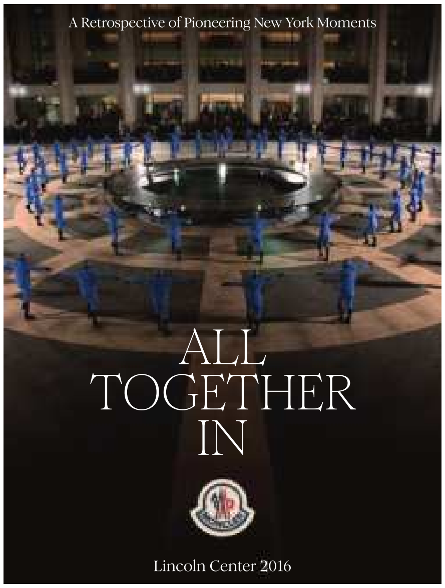
Yet this story belongs to its people.
The dreamers, the builders, the pioneers.
Who, year after year, keep coming back to find each other again.

And maybe that's the thing about falling in love:
At some point, it refuses to remain untold.

New York in Moncler


A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
A CENTRAL SKATE IN
Central Park 2012

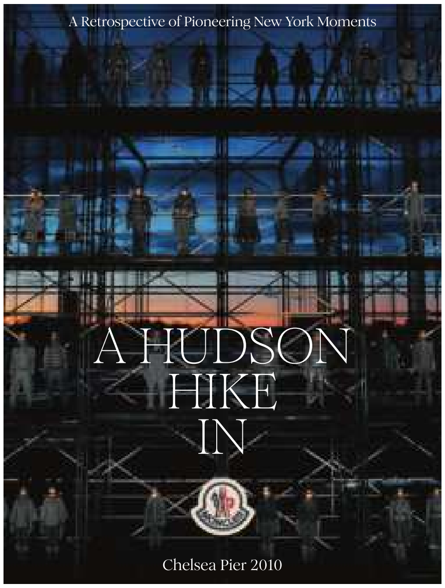
Professional skaters transformed
Wollman Rink into a theatrical ice performance
with a live New York orchestra.


A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
ALL TOGETHER IN
Lincoln Center 2016

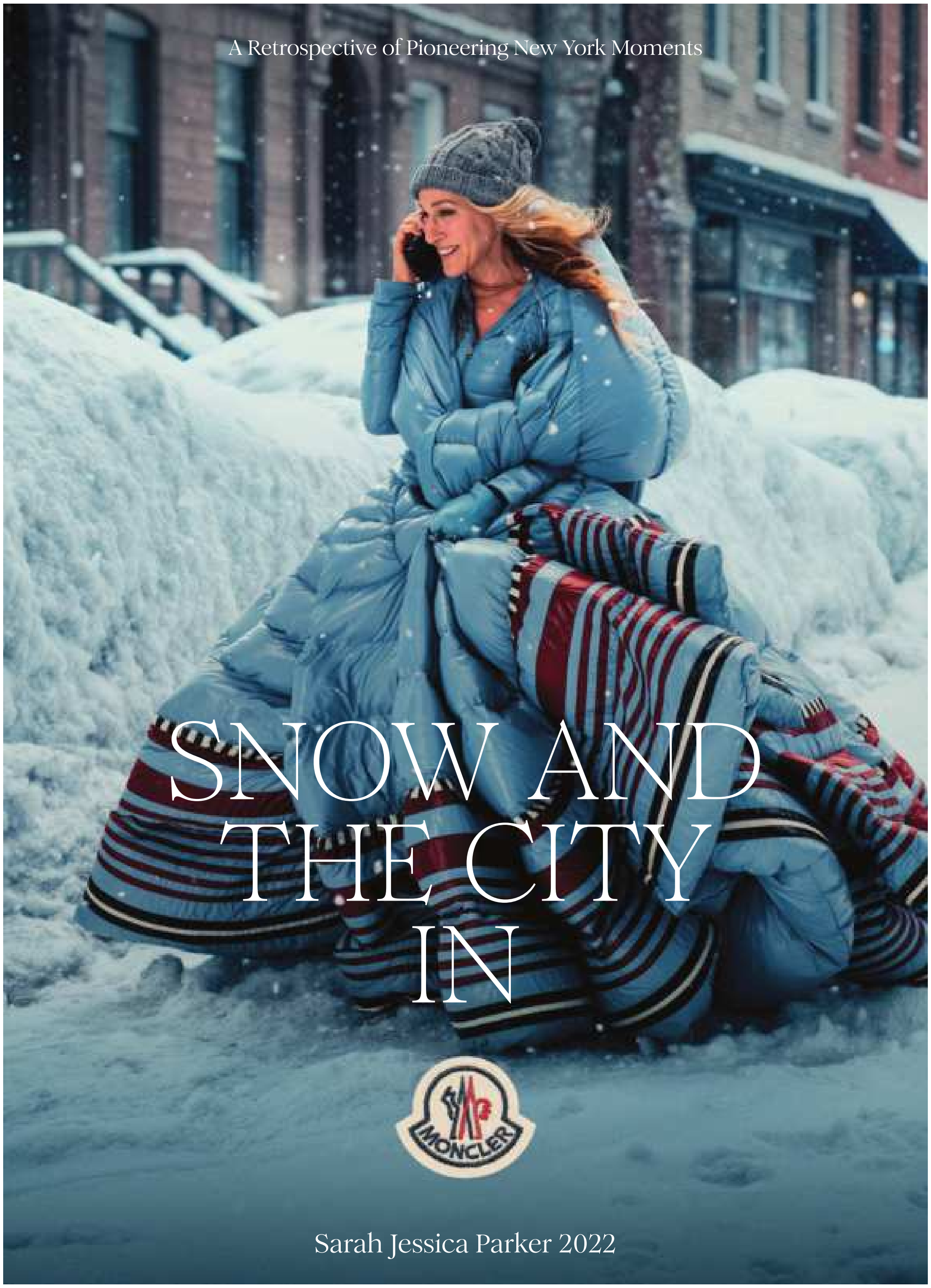
Moncler turned Lincoln Center Plaza
into a live stage, where 80 performers showcased
technical outerwear in the cold.

A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
BROOKLYN'S SPIKE IN
Hammerstein Ballroom 2017

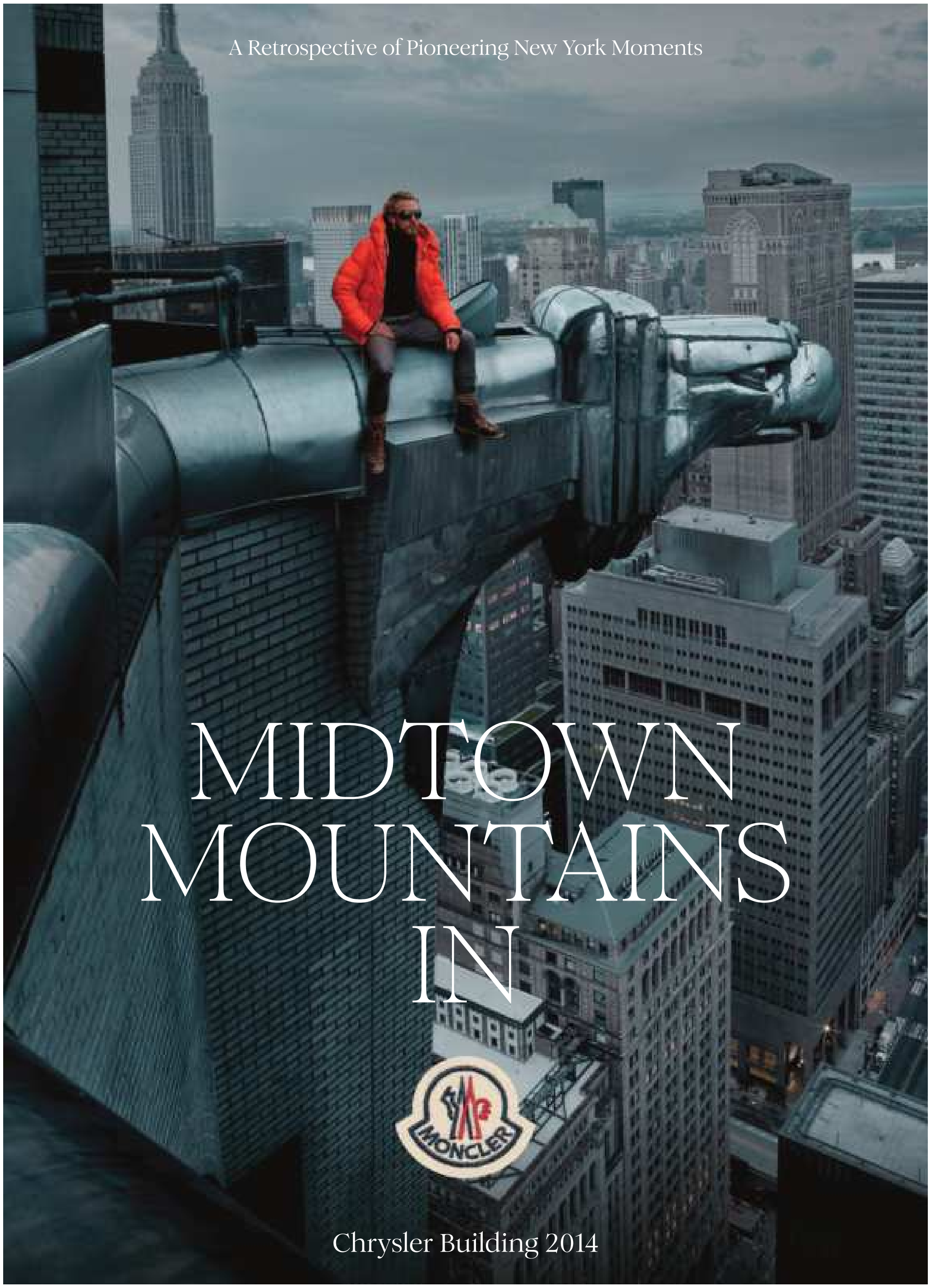
Spike Lee attended Moncler's
Fashion Week presentation, celebrating the brand's
ties to New York's creative culture.


A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
A HUDSON HIKE IN
Chelsea Pier 2010

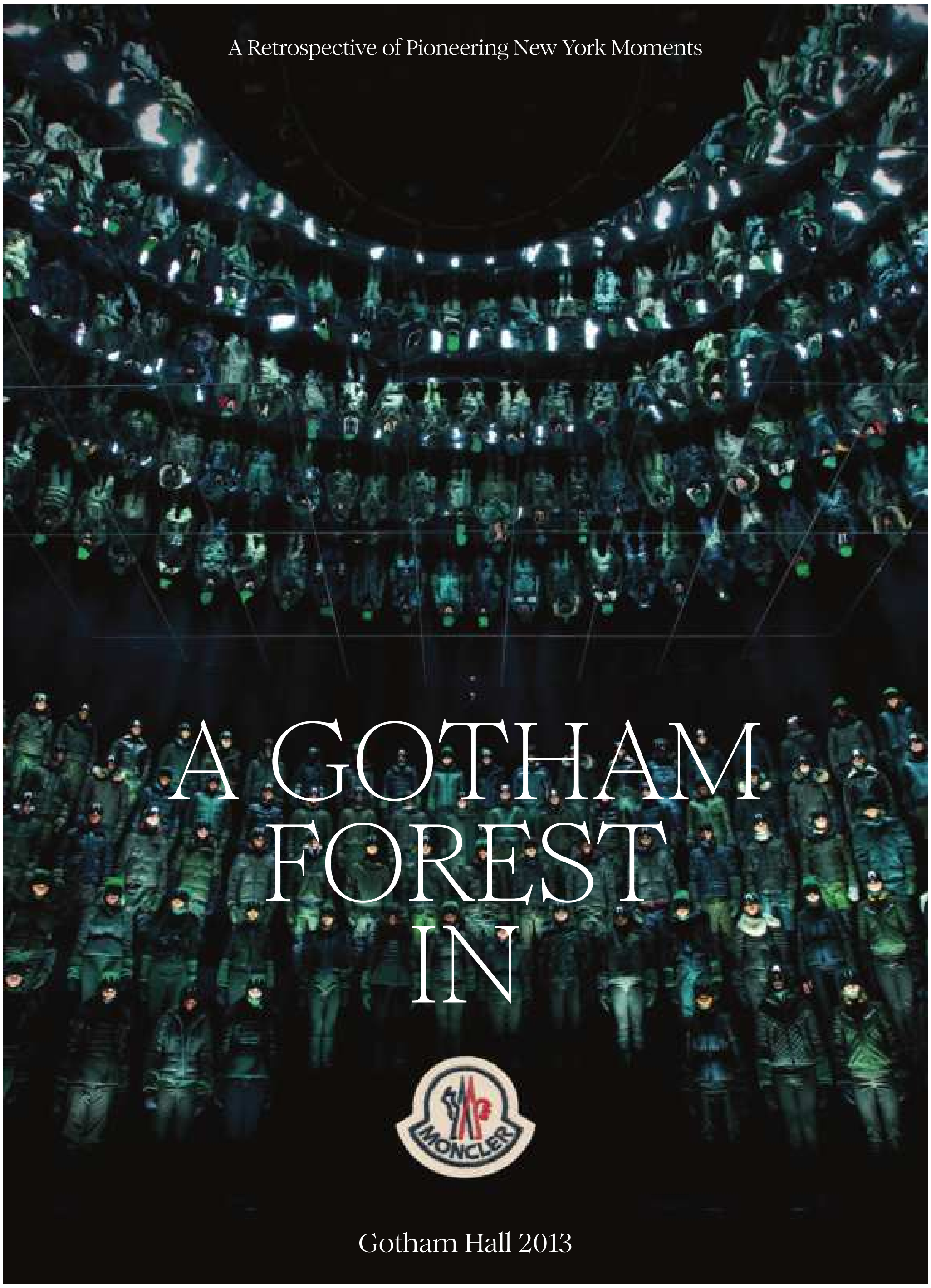
An atmospheric riverside site
became an urban mountain,
where 100 models scaled scaffolding.


A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
SNOW AND
THE CITY
IN
MONCLER
Sarah Jessica Parker 2022

Sarah Jessica Parker's couture-inspired puffer gown, co-created with Pierpaolo Piccioli, became a symbol of New York winter.


A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
MIDTOWN
MOUNTAINS
IN
MONCLER
Chrysler Building 2014

Annie Leibovitz photographed
Simon Howell atop the Chrysler Building,
embodying Moncler's boundaryless outerwear.



A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments

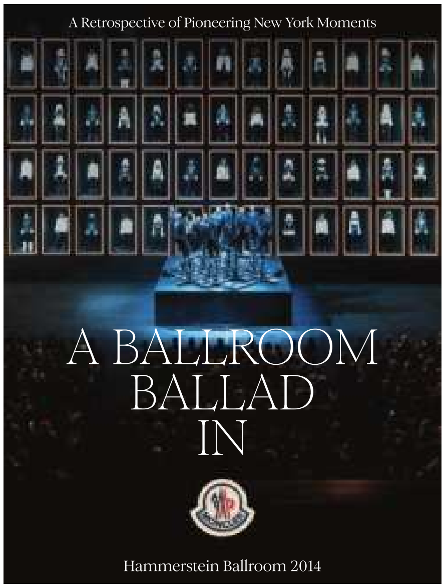
A GOTHAM FOREST IN

Gotham Hall 2013

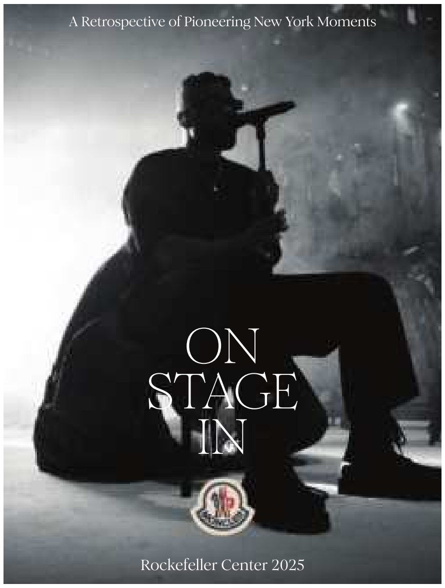
Moncler transformed Gotham Hall
into an alpine forest, where 370 models
created an immersive installation.

A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
SUN IN
THE CITY
IN
MONCLER
Fei Fei Sun 2025

New York-based model Fei Fei Sun wears Edward Enninful's debut designer collection, co-created for Moncler Genius.


A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
A BALLROOM
BALLAD
IN
MONCLER
Hammerstein Ballroom 2014

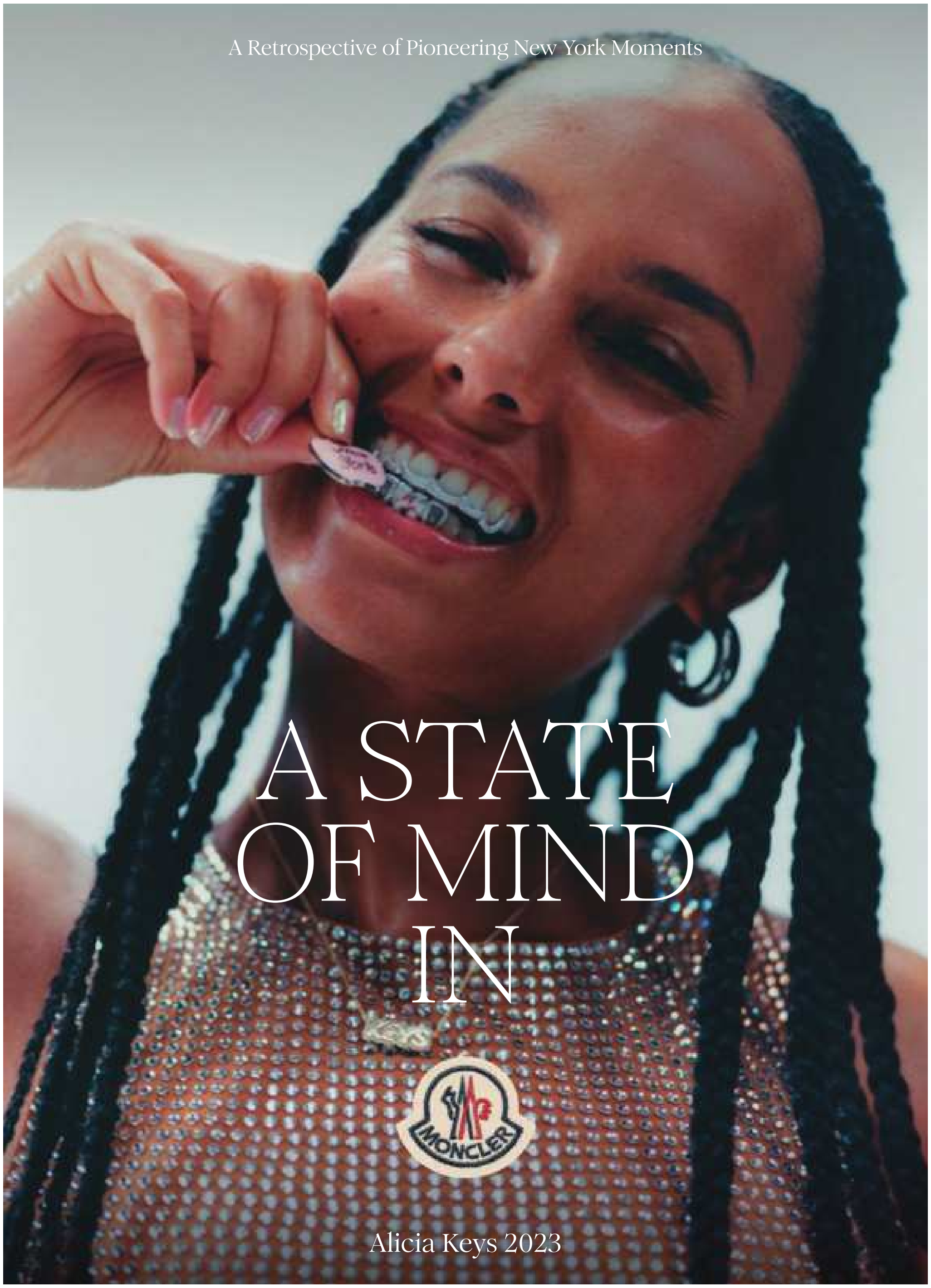
A theatrical presentation at Hammerstein Ballroom featured 60 choristers within André and Michel Décosterd's Pendulum Choir.


A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
ON
STAGE
IN
MONCLER
Rockefeller Center 2025

Tobe Nwigwe brought an intimate, rousing performance to Rockefeller Center for Moncler's Warmer Together campaign.

A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments
ART
FOR LOVE
IN
MONCLER
New York Public Library 2015

In support of amfAR, Art For Love invited photographers to reinterpret the Maya jacket. Pictured: Camilla Åkrans' portrait.



A Retrospective of Pioneering New York Moments

A STATE
OF MIND
IN

Alicia Keys 2023

Alicia Keys' Moncler Genius collection
revisited 1990s New York through oversized silhouettes,
technical fabrics, and bold color.

VOGUE

September 2026

GREEN PARTY
MODELS CAROLINE TRENTINI AND JOAN SMALLS, IN ERDEM X BARBOUR COATS, FIND SOME SHADE AMID THE TALL GRASS. PHOTOGRAPHED BY OLIVER HADLEE PEARCH.

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Up Front
Political reporter Annie Karni didn't mean to tell the people running the country about her divorce—it just kept coming out

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Same Again
The artist Taryn Simon has dressed in variations of the same outfit for years. On the eve of a major exhibition, she explains why

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Women designers are reinventing the slim look of American denim. By Jane Herman

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A new *Cherry Orchard* lands in New York

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Is the best garden design no design at all? Chloe Schama digs into chaos gardening

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Can we improve our mood by freezing our faces? Maya Singer on the new frontiers of the mind-body connection

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Hollywood designer Tina Charad goes analog with ceramics

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A new collaboration with Eckhaus Latta lends a sweet subversion to J.Crew's elevated staples. By Max Berlinger

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New scents stitch together unusual influences

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A stiff upper lip can be brutal for your teeth. Alessandra Codinha unlearns how to grit and bear it

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The fusty silk scarf is cool again

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A forgotten polymath of the Pop art movement gets an overdue tribute. By Grace Edquist

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An imaginative resort opens in Estonia

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Future Promise
Thrilling fiction looks at what's to come

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Just Kids
Kaia Gerber and Homer Gere have the good fortune of famous parents and flourishing careers—including roles in summer's alluring series *The Shards.* They talk to Rob Haskell about being themselves and making their own way

294
Train Dreams
The cream of London's West End hops aboard a 1932 Pullman carriage—reimagined by Baz Luhrmann and Catherine Martin—for a journey steeped in glamour, gossip, revelry, and fashion

306
Raw Material
Grunge is alive and well in 2026—but instead of oversized flannels and ditsy florals, its new era is defined by gauzy layers, distressed denim, and an undone sense of ease

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FASHION EDITOR: CARLOS NAZARIO. HAIR, LOUIS GHEWY; MAKEUP, MEL ARTER. PRODUCED BY PARTNER FILMS.

Maison
Francis Kurkdjian
Paris
Maison
Francis Kurkdjian
Paris
Baccarat
Rouge 540
Extrait de parfum

*L'alchimie des sens**

Francis Kurkdjian

Baccarat
Rouge 540

* The alchemy of senses

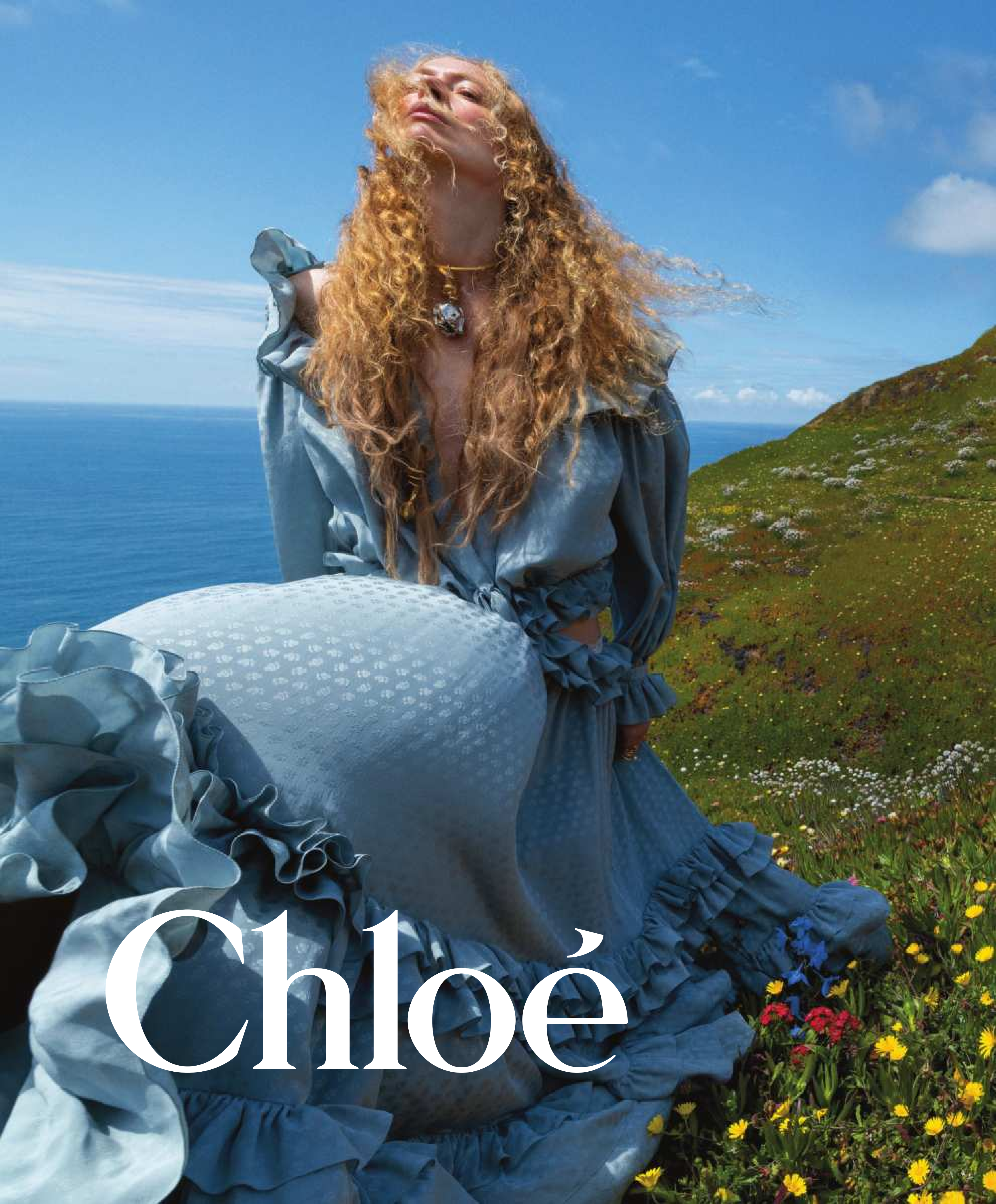
Juergen Teller

GIVENCHY

PARIS

Kaia Gerber

Eva Herzigova


Chloé

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Selena Forrest
Left *The Menil Collection*, right *The Rothko Chapel*, May 2026 in Houston, Texas

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Tom Ford
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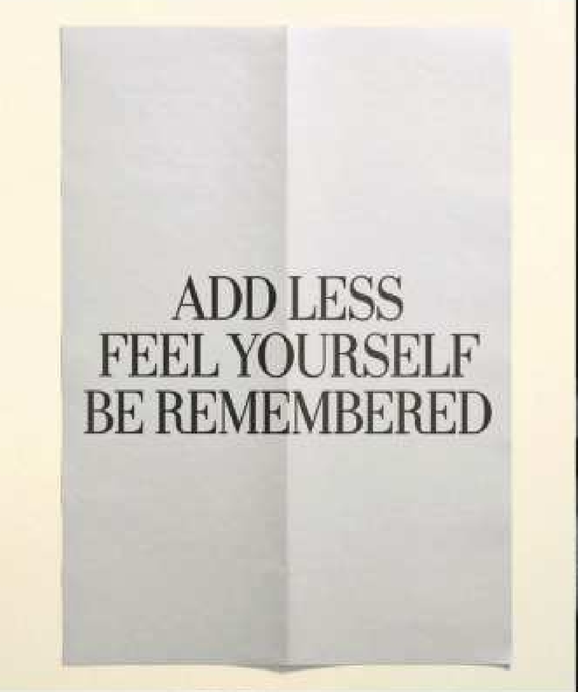

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VOGUE

September 2026

PRINTS AND REPEAT
"IT'S OKAY TO THROW THE RACKET," SAYS SABALENKA, DRESSED IN A GUCCI DRESS AND HEELS AND WEARING HER OWN RING. "IT'S OKAY TO YELL. IT'S OKAY TO GO NUTS. SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED TO LET IT GO." AUDEMARS PIGUET WATCH. PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN KLEIN.

FASHION EDITOR: TONNE GOODMAN. HAIR, SANDY HULLETT; MAKEUP, MARK CARRASQUILLO. PRODUCED BY THAT ONE PRODUCTION. LOCATION: FAENA MIAMI BEACH.

318
Aryna Unchained
Aryna Sabalenka—tennis's hard-hitting, heart-on-her-sleeve world number one—understands that her sport is opera. By Rob Haskell

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Inside Demna's Gucciverse
The Georgia-born designer has gone from Vetements' wild child to leading Gucci. Nathan Heller revisits fashion's restless disrupter as he sets about reinvigorating a global mega-brand

328
The Matriarch
Julia Louis-Dreyfus talks to Adrienne Miller about her Broadway debut as the genteel head of a family in *Other Desert Cities,* Jon Robin Baitz's play about secrets coming to light

330
Remembrance
Dodie Kazanjian remembers David Hockney; her husband, Calvin Tomkins; and the conversation she wishes they'd had

332
Family Ties
Marta Ortega Pérez leads Zara and its parent company, Inditex—the biggest fashion retailer in the world—by focusing on relationships, image-making, and a mind-blowing infrastructure. By Gaby Wood

338
Ahead of the Beat
Two decades after he was heralded as the savior of classical music, conductor Gustavo Dudamel has lost none of his vim or vigor. Mattie Kahn catches up with him just before he takes the helm of the New York Philharmonic

342
Reaching Crescendo
Dudamel's arrival at the Philharmonic has triggered a rhapsody in the city's classical-music scene—particularly among the young virtuosos of the Juilliard School

356
All Wrapped Up
Models Joan Smalls, Caroline Trentini, and Jessica Miller decamp to the bucolic British countryside in fall's finest outerwear

378
Last Look

Cover Look **Arm Candy**
Kaia Gerber and Homer Gere wear Chanel. To get Gerber's look, try: Pure Radiant Tinted Moisturizer SPF 30, Laguna Bronzing Powder, The Multiple in Hot Take, Quad Eyeshadow in Koh Rong, Brow Shaping Gel, Notorious Mascara, Afterglow Lip Shine in Abbey Road. All by Nars. Hair, Guido Palau; makeup, Pat McGrath. Details, see In This Issue.
Photographer: Steven Meisel.
Fashion Editor: Spencer Singer.

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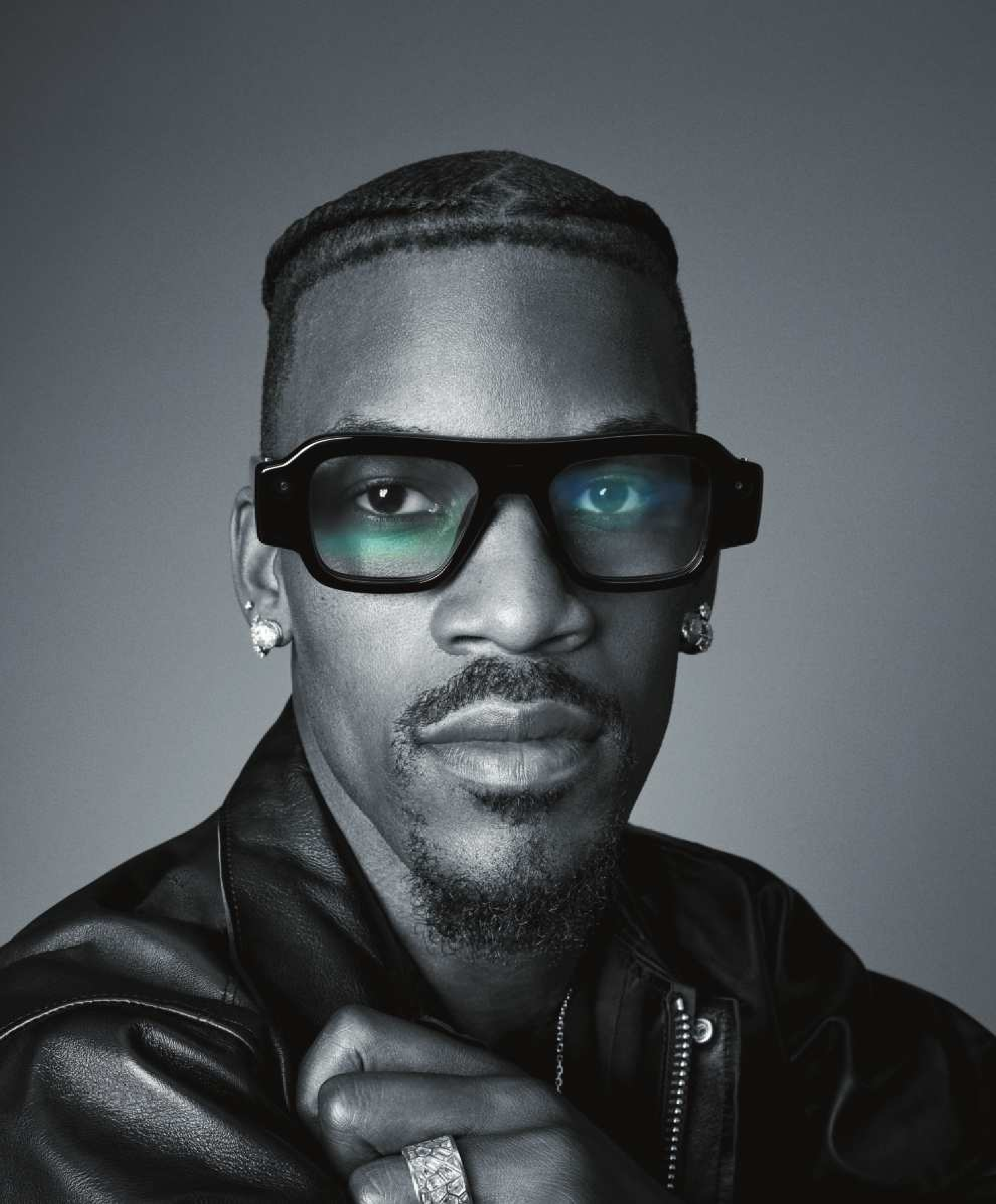
A LOT ABOUT TRAVELING?
THEN - WHAT WAS NAMED
AMERICA'S BEST HOTEL
BY FORBES TRAVELER?
WELL- IT WAS THE MAGNIFICENT
SAN YSIDRO RANCH
MONTECITO, CALIFORNIA
SYR

SPECS



SPECS

Letter From the Editor

THEN AND NOW
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: KAIA GERBER, IN CHLOÉ AND AN OMEGA WATCH, AND HOMER GERE, IN PRADA, PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN MEISEL. JEAN PAUL GAULTIER IN PARIS, AND MY DAUGHTER, ALICE, ON A BEACH IN SOUTH CAROLINA—TWO SUMMER HIGH POINTS. CINDY CRAWFORD AND RICHARD GERE'S 1992 COVER, PHOTOGRAPHED BY HERB RITTS.

VOGUE
THE COMPLETE WRAP ON WINTER DRESSING

Time Machine

PATRIMOINE. THAT WAS THE FRENCH WORD I heard over and over in Paris while attending couture shows and jewelry appointments in July. The tension was all about protecting heritage while bringing history forward—equally true when it came to Cartier's panthers and Matthieu Blazy's techno tweeds.

The weight of heritage is not unknown to me. I grew up in the shadows of impressive parents who couldn't help but affect the way people think of me. It's taken me time to find my own identity and carve my own space, and I try to handle that pressure as I have approached taking the helm at *Vogue:* by letting myself be inspired by legacy and history rather than buckling under the weight of both.

Our September cover stars are models of forging your own path with grace. Shot by Steven Meisel, Kaia Gerber and Homer Gere wear a variety of looks from new creative directors at storied fashion houses, all of whom are taking the classic codes of those maisons and reinterpreting them by adding their own distinctive stamp.

The occasion for this is *The Shards,* a slick, spooky series adaptation from Ryan Murphy of Bret Easton Ellis's 2023 best-selling novel about a serial killer trolling Los Angeles in the early 1980s. The casting seems designed to attract attention, conjuring memories of Homer's father and Kaia's mother's legendary 1990s romance (and their Herb Ritts *Vogue* cover from 1992). Homer and Kaia are *not* a couple, of course—and they got their shared history out of the way when they met. As Homer told our writer Rob Haskell, one of the first things he said to Kaia was "'Should we just acknowledge the fact that our parents were married?' She was like, 'Yeah. Cool.' And that was it." Both are thoughtful but unbothered on the subject of having famous parents. "I've only ever been a nepo baby, and I've only ever benefited in my career from it," Kaia says. "But what that's done for me is make me want to work harder."

Elsewhere in the issue, Nathan Heller reports on Demna's first collections for Gucci—a collision of past and present—and Gaby Wood meets Marta Ortega Pérez, the head of Zara, who inherited its stewardship but who has pushed it in personal and modern directions. And there's the New York Philharmonic's new maestro, Gustavo Dudamel, who brings a rush of energy to every room he enters. Bring on Dudamania!

CMalle

KAIA GERBER AND HOMER GERE: FASHION EDITOR: SPENCER SINGER. GAULTIER AND ALICE: COURTESY OF CHLOE MALLE. CINDY CRAWFORD AND RICHARD GERE: PHOTOGRAPHED BY HERB RITTS, *VOGUE*, NOVEMBER 1992.

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Le Brassus

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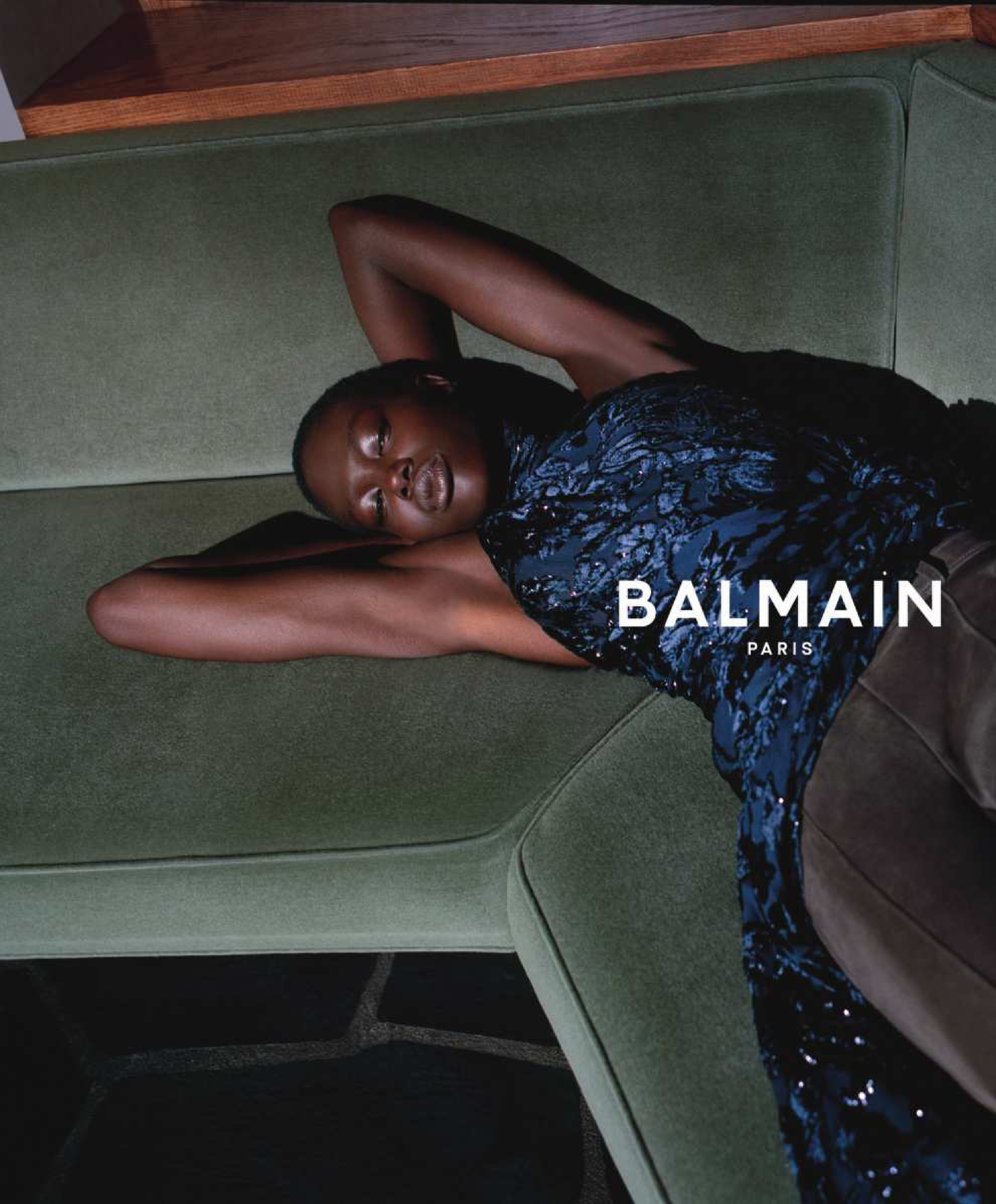
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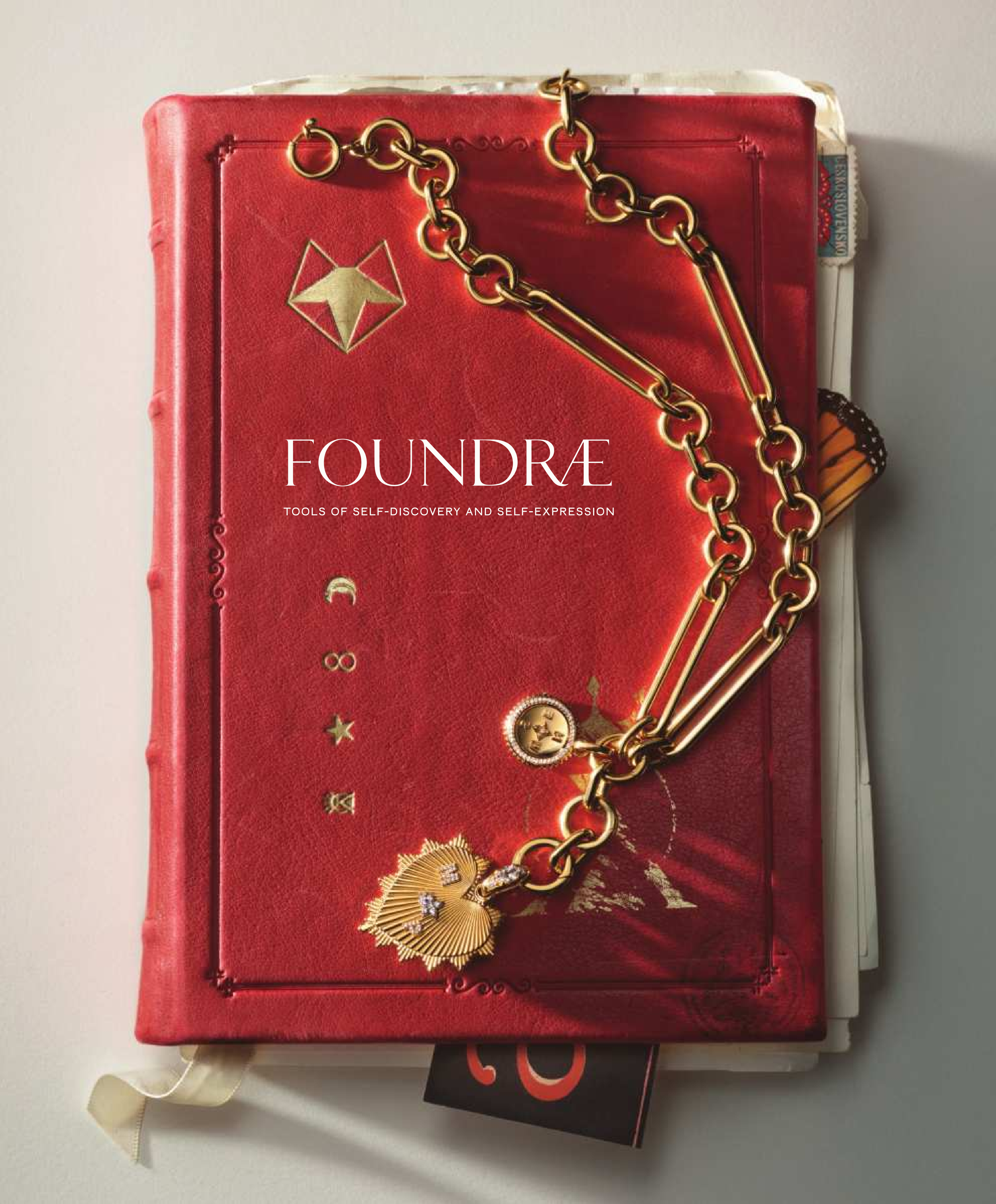
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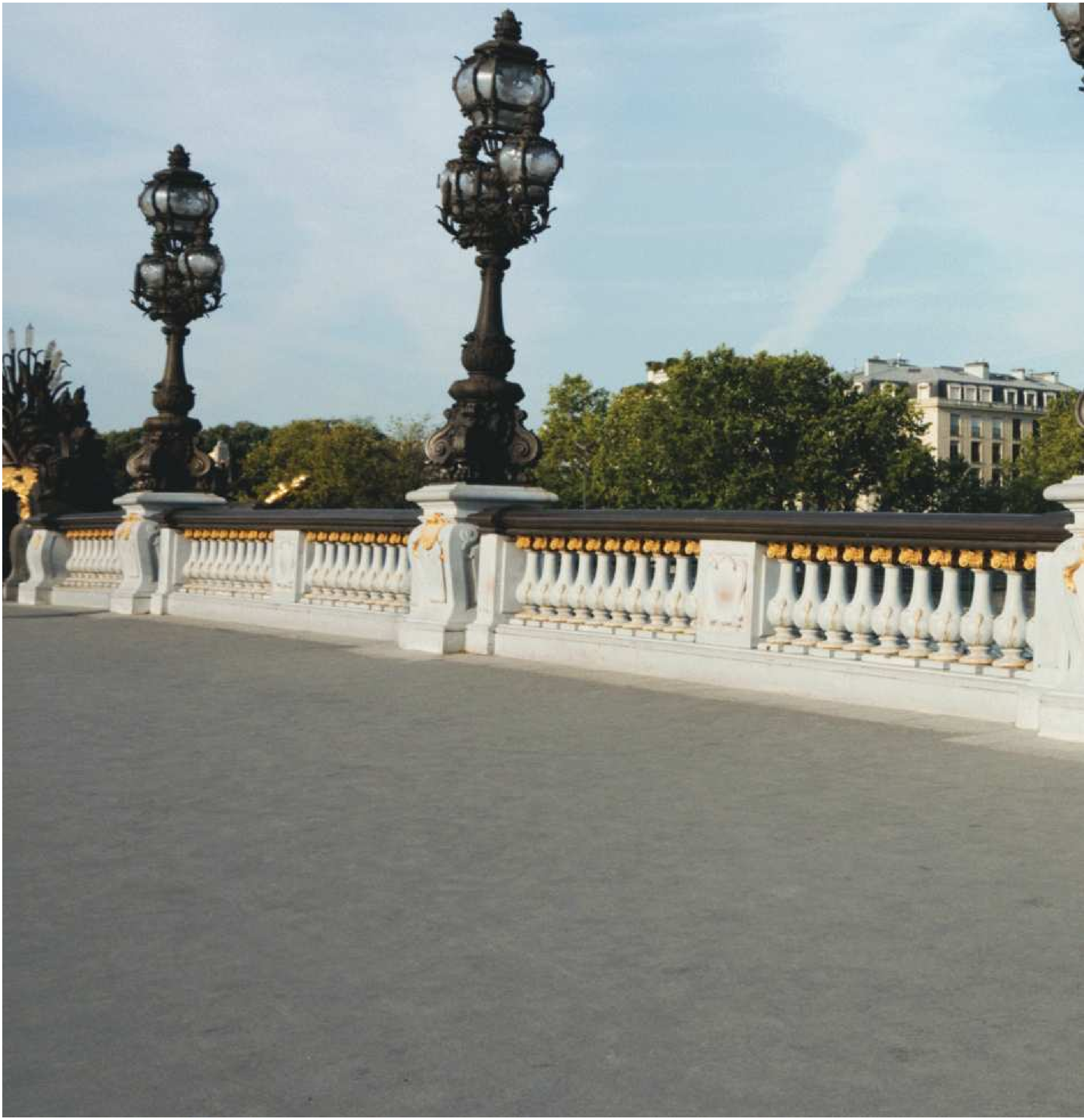

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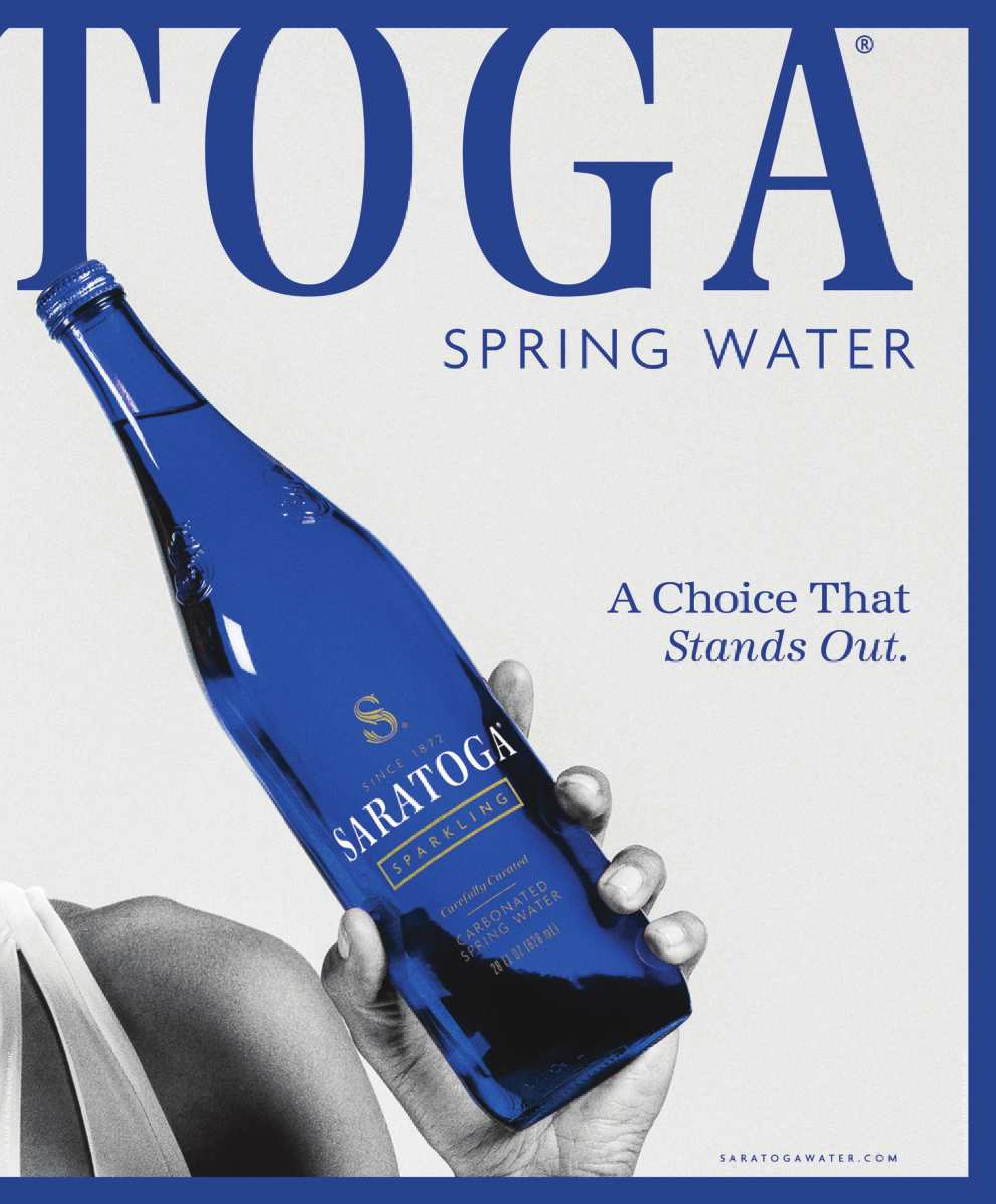
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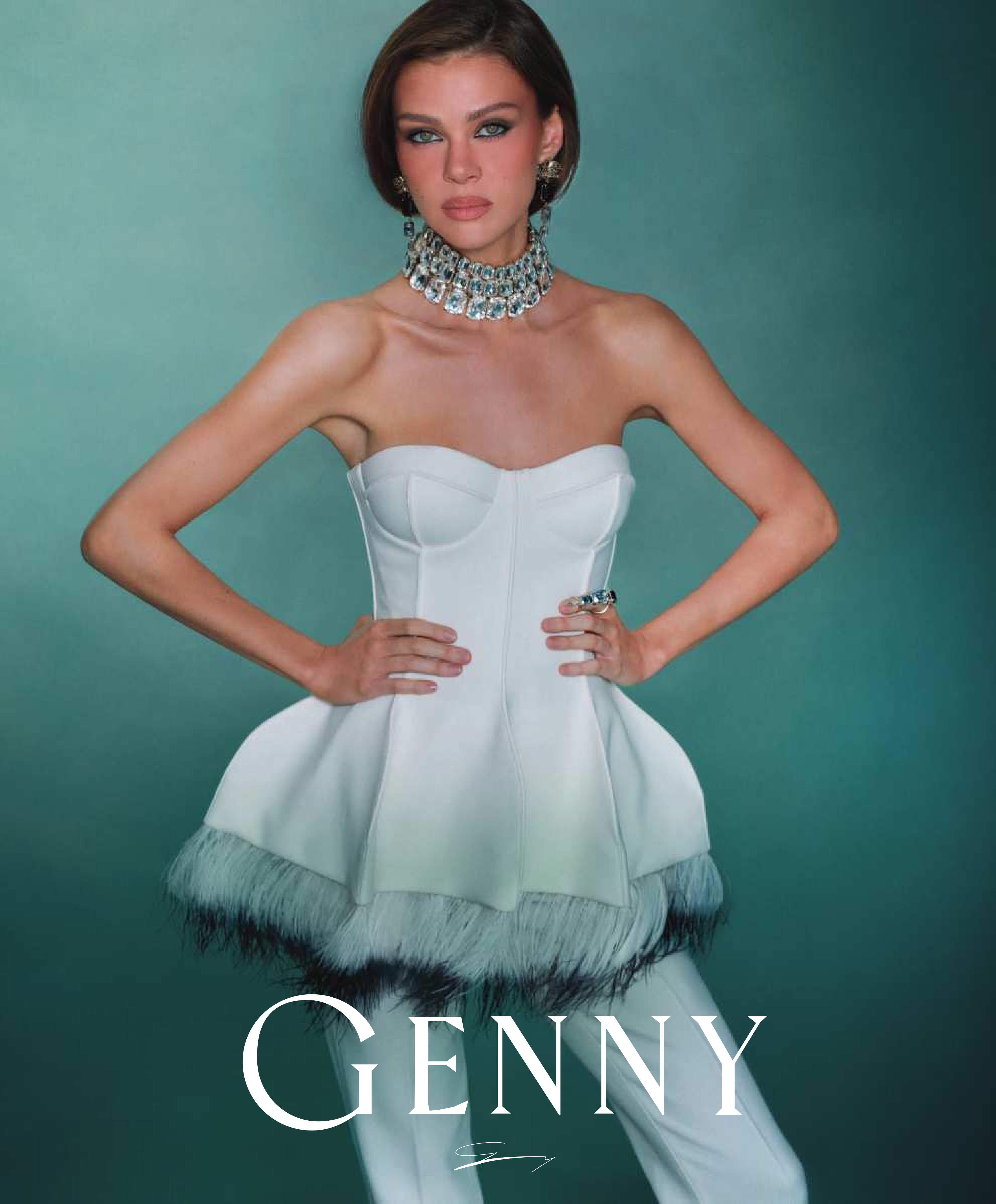
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THE SOUND OF MUSIC
LEFT: PRINCIPAL BASSIST TIMOTHY COBB, VIOLIST LEAH FERGUSON, PRINCIPAL CLARINETIST ANTHONY MCGILL, VIOLIST TABITHA RHEE, AND CELLIST CLAIRE DEOKYONG KIM OF THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC. ABOVE: PHOTOGRAPHER THEO WENNER. BELOW: FLAUTIST PHOEBE RAWN, VIOLINIST MAYA KILBURN, PIANIST JUDE GIDDENS, CELLIST ARI PERAZA-WEBB, AND OBOIST CELIA WOJCIK OF JUILLIARD.

In Good Company

Styled by the Oscar-nominated *Marty Supreme* costume designer Miyako Bellizzi, "Reaching Crescendo" (page 342) is a story abuzz with real Juilliard musicians and members of the New York Philharmonic. "I wanted to celebrate the spirit of the students' lives," Bellizzi says of her fashion vision for the young talents, "and give them the opportunity to really shine."

Theo Wenner (AT TOP RIGHT, with cellist Claire Deokyong Kim) photographed them all at Lincoln Center, ringing in a new era in the city's classical-music scene as Gustavo Dudamel arrives (more on that in Mattie Kahn's profile of the conductor, "Ahead of the Beat," page 338). On set, according to producer and Juilliard alumna Juliette Kenn de Balinthazy, the students put on an impromptu show. As they posed with their instruments, one of them started playing, and the rest soon joined in. "For them, it's a reflex," Kenn de Balinthazy says.

SET DESIGN: JULIA WAGNER. WENNER: GREGORY BIRKHOFER.

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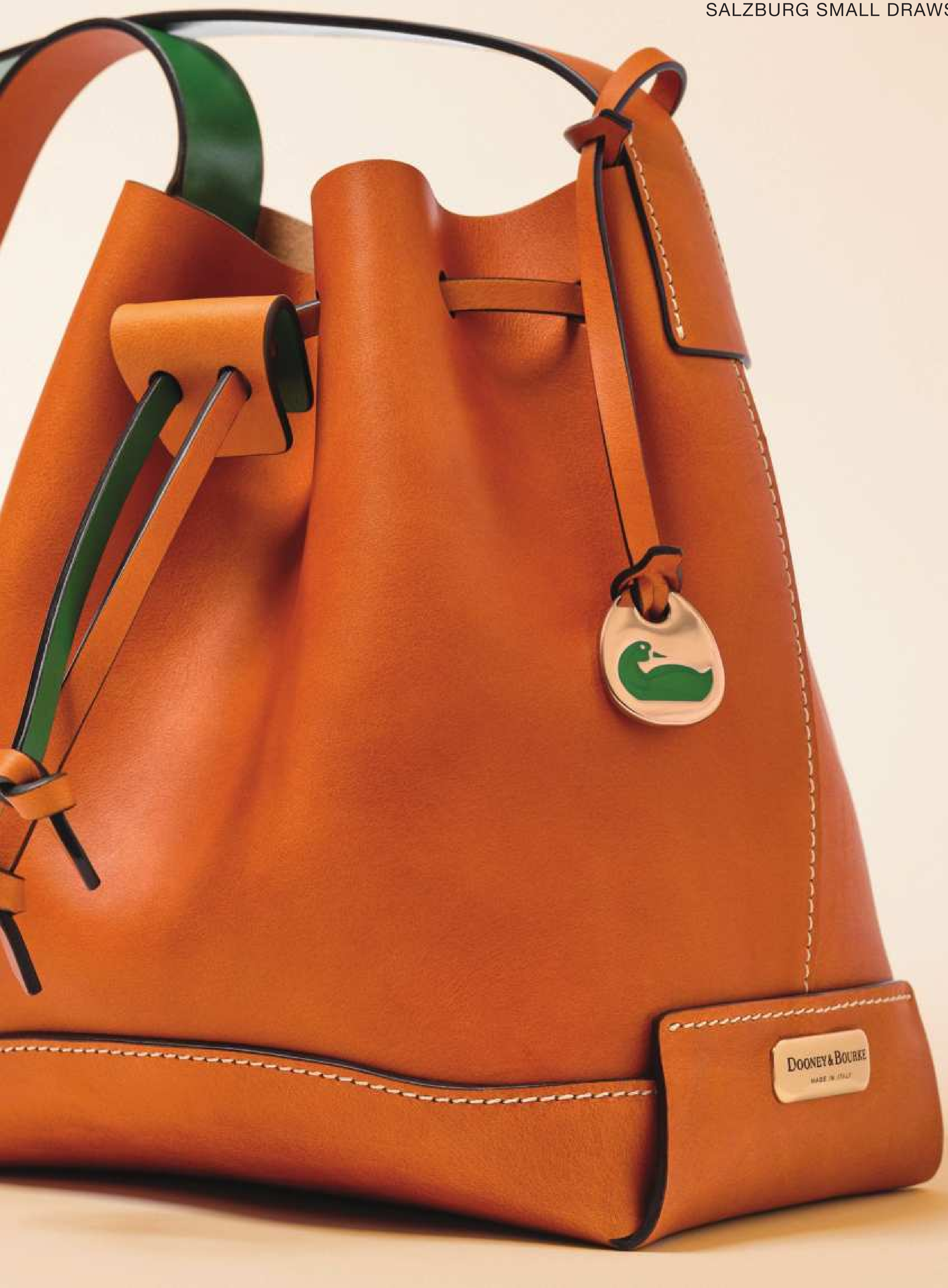
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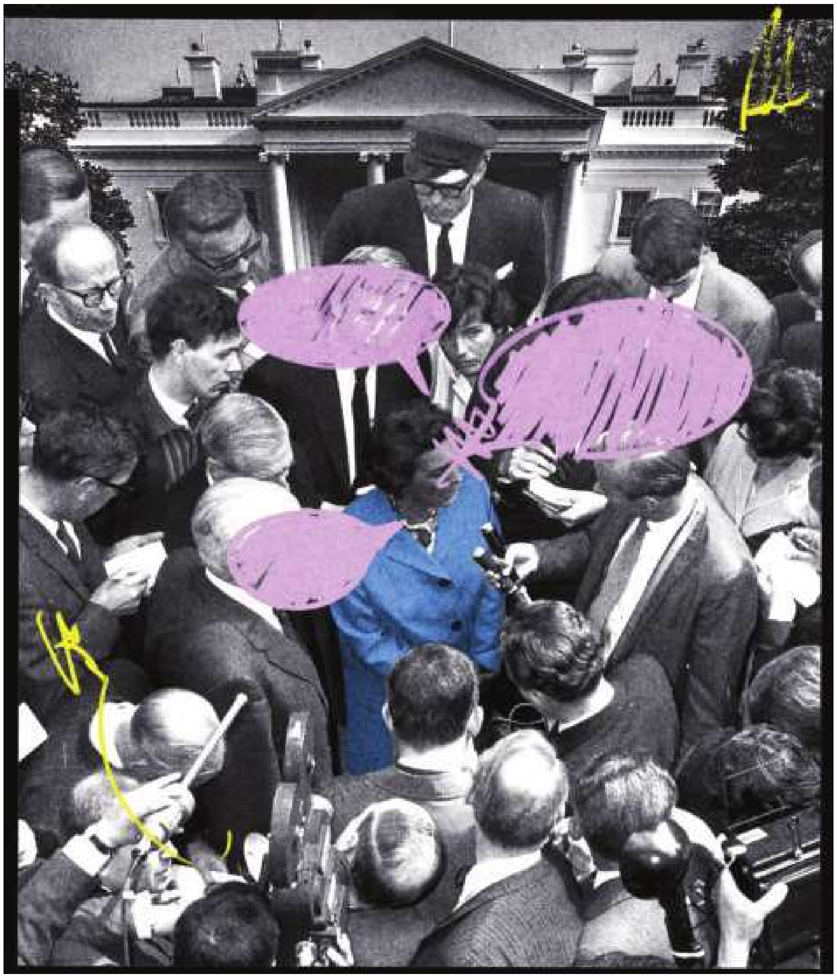

Some Personal News

The end of her marriage caught political reporter Annie Karni by surprise. Maybe that was why she couldn't stop talking about it.

During the first summer after my separation, I didn't mean to tell the people running this country that I was getting divorced— it just kept coming out. I've always been a fairly open book. But when my marriage ended abruptly in the summer of 2025, I felt a frantic need to tell everyone what had happened.

Maybe it was a bid for sympathy. Or I was in shock. I wondered if this was my way of putting it out into the world that I was available. Perhaps I was looking for advice. Mostly I felt I had no other way of making clear that I was going through a profound but invisible change in identity.

The ending of my 10-year marriage came at me fast and seemingly from out of nowhere, but nothing like this really happens out of nowhere. I can only explain my side of the street: Just before I got married in 2015, I joined *Politico* to cover the presidential campaign. We lived in Brooklyn at the time, and the campaign immediately took me on the road for much of the following year.

Then came Trump's first term, and with it a move to Washington, DC, for my job; then a first baby; a new job at *The New York Times;* a pandemic; a rescue puppy; a second baby; a new beat covering the maelstrom of Congress; a book deal. I was living in the double-blast zone of the national news cycle and new parenthood, my attention constantly elsewhere. His attention ended up elsewhere too—that is his story to tell.

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TALK THERAPY
"I DIDN'T WANT TO BE AN OVERSHARER," WRITES KARNI, "I WAS A JOURNALIST!"

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES. COLLAGE BY *VOGUE*.

The future looks vintage.

Fashion insiders buy and sell on eBay.

ebay The official pre-loved partner of *Vogue*.

But for years I had carried a low-grade awareness that our marriage had begun to resemble a series of transactions: trading off who was going out and who was staying in, taking turns living our lives. Mostly I chalked it up to these being particularly demanding years. I told myself any marriage between two young professionals with small children would resemble ours. Sometimes, though, that famous Stanley Tucci line from *The Devil Wears Prada* rang in my ears: "Let me know when your whole life goes up in smoke. Means it's time for a promotion." This kind of peaceful if distant coexistence was just how it sometimes went in a long relationship, I figured.

Nobody in my immediate family was divorced; it just wasn't something I even considered. So when the marriage abruptly fell apart, beginning with a conversation he initiated as he fed the dog her nightly treats and I thought I was about to go to bed, I felt a mix of shock, relief, and regret.

For years I had carried a low-grade awareness that our marriage had begun to resemble a series of transactions: trading off who was going out and who was staying in, taking turns living our lives

That summer, all sensations felt heightened. I listened to so much music. Taylor Swift songs felt profound. I talked on the phone to friends for hours as if I were in high school again. I ate carrot ginger soup and not much else. At night I felt alone, but no more or less alone than I'd been feeling for a long time. Living with the uncertainty about what the future might hold was exciting, overwhelming, an intellectual challenge as well as an emotional one. I had no idea what would come next.

"I am thinking about how happy I am," I wrote in my journal one day that summer. "Very sad," just a few days later. "I don't know who or what I am crying about."

One thing that did feel good was working. My editor kindly asked me if I needed a break or wanted to slow down. She said she would follow my lead on these matters. I said to pile it on. Which is why, for a few weeks there, I just couldn't shut up about the fact that I was getting divorced in every corridor of power in Washington.

One Thursday afternoon in July, I sat across the table from Senator Chuck Schumer in a small office at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

That day, he had his campaign hat on, so instead of occupying his ornate office at the Capitol he was stuffed behind a metal desk in a drab room in the Democratic Party headquarters, conducting back-to-back interviews in order to disseminate talking points about winning back the Senate. I tried pushing him for specifics, about the map or the candidates he was trying to recruit in key states, but he would not budge. Schumer is very good at repeating the same thing, over and over, when he doesn't want to say more.

"What are you doing this summer?" he asked as I gathered up my things to go.

"I'm getting divorced," I volunteered.

He peered at me over those famous bifocals that are always about to slip off the tip of his nose.

"How old are your kids?" he asked me. My daughter was three and my son was seven.

"Men are so stupid," he said, shaking his head. "Just so stupid."

He had not pried for any details, simply drawn a quick conclusion, and I took this reaction like I would take it from a well-meaning distant relative at a family gathering: not particularly revelatory, but a somewhat reassuring conversation nonetheless. Sometimes it just feels good for someone to shake their head on your behalf.

The kids were, in fact, all right. My daughter would have no memories of our family arrangement before the split. My son was mostly just excited to have bunk beds in his dad's new house.

We did not use the word *divorce,* but my son lived in the world and was searching for it. "What's it called when you have two houses?" he asked me. "It's just called having two houses," I said. When the divorce was finalized many months later, I told him that the big thing in his life had already happened when he started living in two houses and that the official change was just a piece of paper.

A few weeks after my Schumer interview, I was grocery shopping at Whole Foods, picking up the dreaded sunflower butter (the only nut-adjacent spread allowed at school) when Representative Nancy Mace, the South Carolina Republican, returned a call.

I had written a lot about Mace in the past, but I hadn't spoken to her in a long time. Aside from tormenting the sole out transgender member of Congress by waging a campaign to bar her from using the women's bathroom in the Capitol, Mace had been a side player that year.

But she came roaring back as a person of interest when she defied President Trump to force a vote to have the Department of Justice release unredacted Epstein files. She had positioned herself as a defender of women as well as a defender of Trump, and I wanted to hear how she planned to thread this tricky needle.

"How are you?" Mace asked.

"I'm okay, I'm getting divorced," I said, because, as I mentioned, I couldn't help myself.

Mace was a 47-year-old divorced mother of two. "Well, you just have to realize you're going to be alone for a long time," she said. "You're just gonna spend a lot of time alone."

She was right, I was spending longer stretches than I was accustomed to alone.

"But I'm married to the job," she added.

We moved on, back to our roles in the jobs we were both married to. "I fully support transparency on this issue," she said of the Epstein files.

I was aware that gleaning life lessons from the likes of Chuck Schumer and Nancy Mace was not a conventional mode of summoning a support system. These were politicians—their primary focus was themselves. (I expect a call for a correction here to say that their focus is on their constituents.) Either way,

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JENNIFER LAWRENCE
Elegance is an attitude
LONGINES
THE LONGINES
MASTER COLLECTION

BE
LOVE

PANDORA

I was not a constituent, so they really only considered me in relation to what I could do for or to them.

But there was something that compelled me to keep telling them my personal news: It was as if I was trying on my new identity and seeing how it fit with my professional one, making sure that one was still intact.

Still, I didn't want to be an oversharer. I was a journalist! So a few weeks later, when Steve Bannon returned a call at a low moment, I tried to pull myself together to ask him to weigh in on Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene's recent comments on Gaza, in which she called the crisis a "genocide." But I was kind of holding back tears—I had gotten very good at crying, viewing it simply as a cleansing bodily function, like sneezing—and we both could tell and that was slightly awkward. So I told him why. He wanted the details. And then he told me to pull it together.

"You're Annie fucking Karni," he said. "Come on, girl."

For all of Bannon's democracy-threatening faults—promoting the lie that the 2020 election was stolen, leading the calls for an unconstitutional third term of Donald Trump, promoting extremism and conspiracy theories of all kinds—in this particular moment, I think he was just being kind.

We got back to the subject at hand, more comfortable territory for us all. "Marjorie Taylor Greene just reflects her constituency," he said. "I don't think she's an outlier at all."

Divorce may be almost as common as becoming a parent. But it's less clear what you're supposed to say. I'm sorry? Congratulations? I've found that the correct answer is to say both

The world, it ticked on. Trump's Medicaid-slashing domestic policy bill was so deeply unpopular that it could help Democrats win back the Senate. And Trump's failure to release the Epstein files was driving a wedge between the president and his base. And Greene's break with Trump on Israel hinted at a growing foreign policy rift on the right. And I was getting divorced, in case you missed it.

As busy weeks rolled by and I rearranged the house, burned sage, wallpapered my bedroom, took the trash bins out on Sunday nights and wheeled them back in on Monday mornings, the urge to talk to everyone I covered about my divorce began to subside. I went back to conducting interviews without inserting my personal life into the conversation, and that was probably for the best for everyone.

I had now told enough people that I began to notice a pattern. There is a formula for responding to a pregnant woman that doesn't require much thought. What week are you? How are you feeling? Do you know what you're having? Oh, boys are the best; oh, girls are the best. Cherish every moment, etc., etc.

Divorce may be almost as common, and marks another massive change. But it's less clear what you're supposed to say. I'm sorry? Congratulations? I've found that the correct answer is to say both. Maybe people should ask you what week you are, because the emotional landscape does seem to shift on a week-to-week basis in that first trimester of a separation.

About a year later, I found myself interviewing representatives Lauren Boebert and Anna Paulina Luna, two showboat MAGA congresswomen, for a story about sexual harassment on Capitol Hill. I was settling into the shared-custody schedule and my new life, with its new ups and downs, and mostly I was enjoying it. The reality of divorce is that in some ways it means acquiring a second life, and getting to be multiple selves at the same time. You are still the grown-up, parent version of yourself. But you are also returned, at least part-time, to a previous, younger-feeling solo version that is nice to meet up with again after a long separation. A year in, the out-of-body feeling had subsided. Pop music was seeming less profound. My diet had expanded beyond vats of monochrome vegetable soup. A look back at my journal from this time reports that there was now "more appetite, less feeling like something intense is happening even when nothing is happening."

Boebert, for her part, had a hardened view of cheaters on Capitol Hill, which appeared to be informed by her own experience. "My best friend was a little skank and she ruined my marriage," Boebert said when I asked her about the charge to rid Congress of sexual harassers (many of whom are married men).

That must have been hard, I answered, noting that my marriage had also ended recently. It was just becoming part of who I was, giving me a new way to relate, letting me see layers in others that might have previously gone unnoticed. Life can go sideways for anyone.

"I'm sorry about your marriage," Luna said to me softly after I turned off the tape recorder. They each offered me a slightly awkward hug, an unusual way to end an interview.

When I saw Bannon later that summer, I admitted to him that his "first name fucking last name" pep talk had been as effective as any I'd received.

He said I looked happier. And he warned me it was still no time to be giving my heart away to anybody new. (Steve Bannon, relationship counselor. The world is full of surprises.)

My summer of sharing was awkward, but it had helped settle me, helped me realize that I was still me, even in transition, and that you get the support you ask for.

When my daughter was born in 2021, I received a letter marking the occasion from Hillary Clinton, whose failed presidential campaign I had covered five years earlier. "I send my best wishes to you for a lifetime of amazing adventures and accomplishments, with those who love you cheering you along the way," she wrote to my newborn daughter.

Here we were less than four years later, and I jokingly asked my friend who had worked for Clinton for many years whether he could convince her to write me a divorce letter, to mark another new phase of life. I suggested that she could even recycle the same language: "I send my best wishes to you for a lifetime of amazing adventures and accomplishments, with those who love you cheering you along the way." I would have framed it too. □

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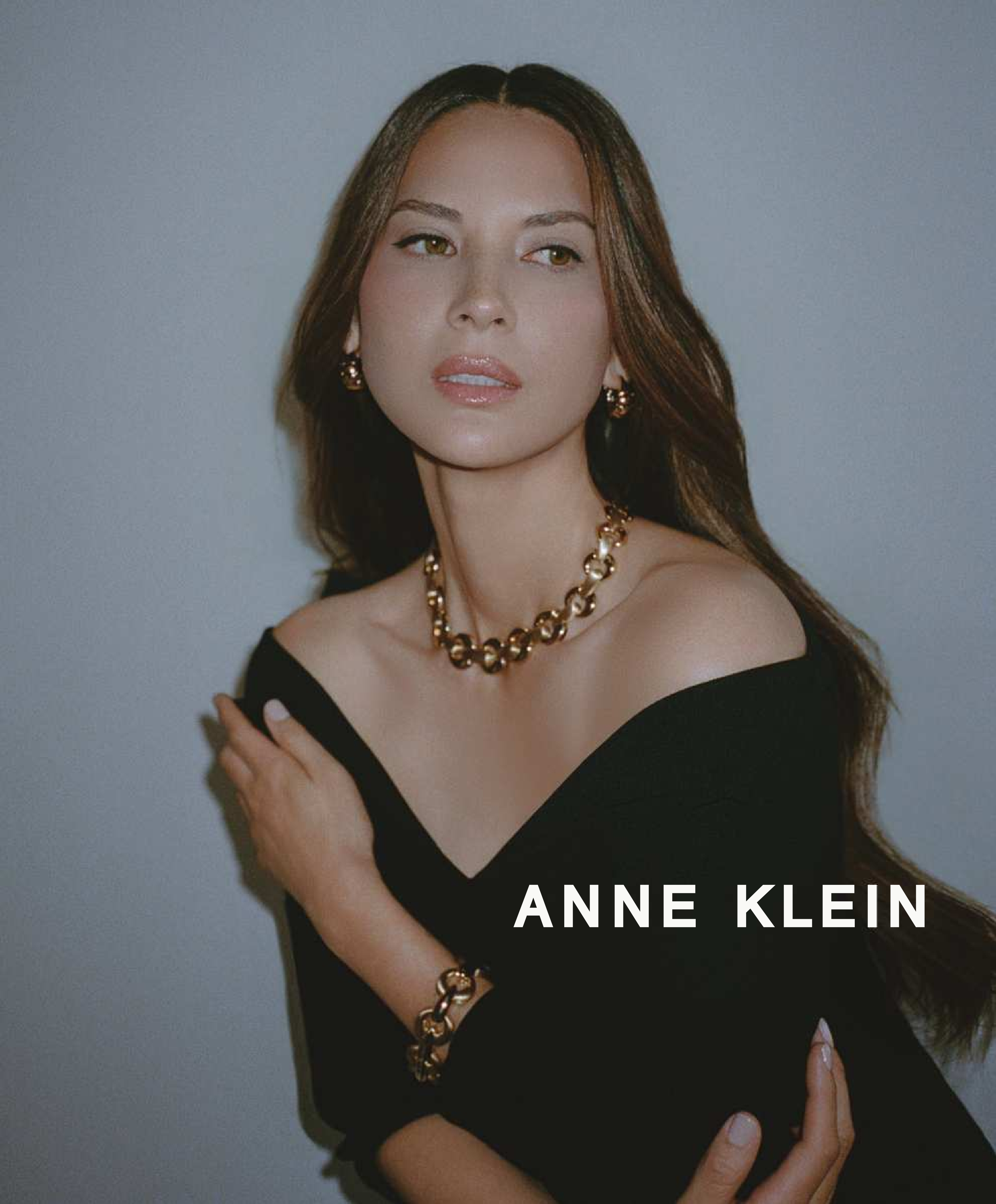
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Same Again

The artist Taryn Simon has dressed in variations of the same outfit for years. On the eve of a major exhibition, she explains why. Photographed by Thomas Dozol.

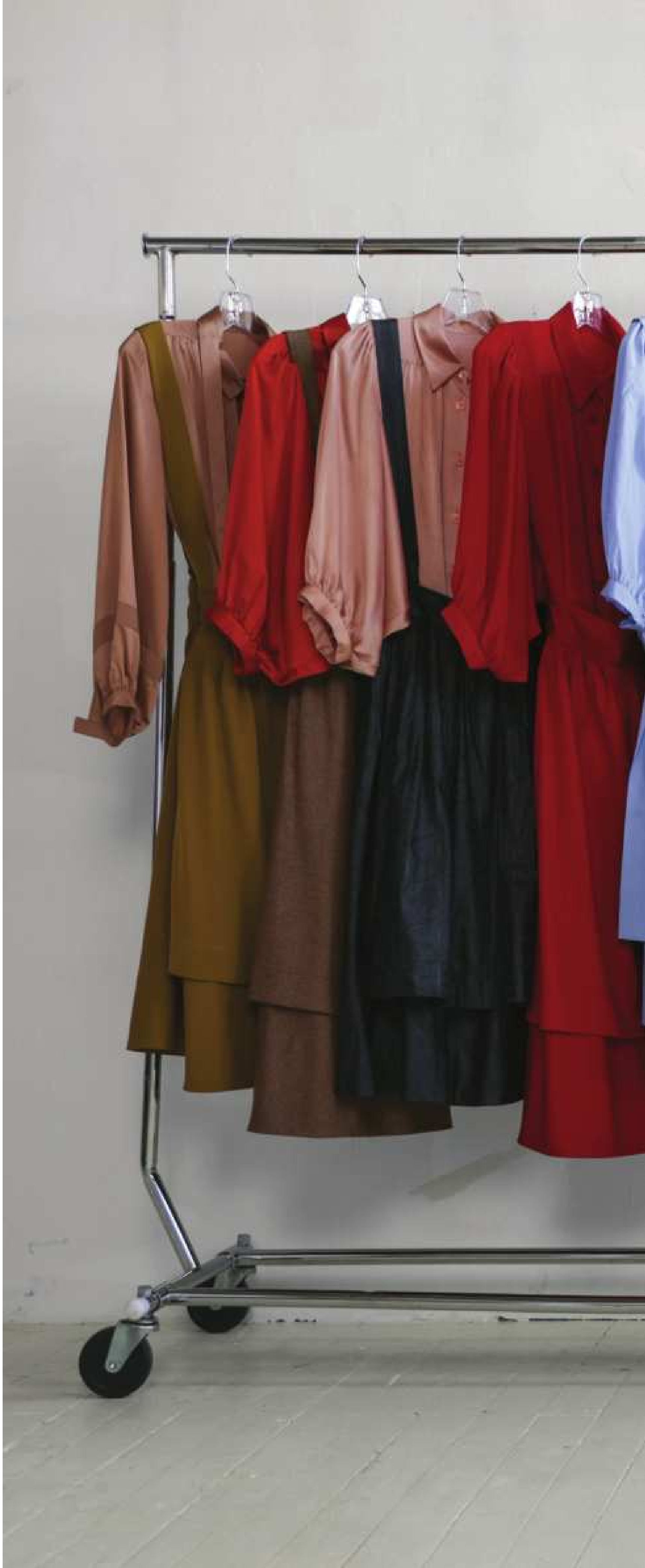
An artist's outfit can send different messages: Georgia O'Keeffe in her austere blacks and whites, Picasso in his Breton stripe, photographer Bill Cunningham pedaling through New York City in his French sanitation workers kit. If you've been walking the streets of Manhattan for enough years, you might have caught a glimpse of another artist in a signature ensemble: Taryn Simon, wearing a skirt that hits just below the knee, held up by suspenders, with a moderate balloon-sleeve blouse tucked in beneath.

Simon's consideration, at the outset, was practical: Much of her work is photographic, and she needed her hands free, a pocket for her light meter, and also somewhere to stash her wallet. "I never wanted to carry a bag," she says. But there was a deeper evaluation taking place as well: to present herself respectably, without excess formality. Some of Simon's best-known work—portraits of men exonerated by DNA evidence, for instance, or photographs of Ukrainian children living in an orphanage—necessitates an air of composed respect.

That she would devise and refine this outfit herself is not that surprising. Simon was raised in New York by a mother who made almost all her clothing and who taught her to sew. Nothing was thrown away in their household, and whenever a functional object—a box to hold papers, for example—could be made more beautiful, it was. "It contributed to how I see value," Simon says. "I like to feel that I'm in something with heart in it."

This September she will take over the entire rotunda at the Guggenheim with "Taryn Simon: Father Country, I Do Love You." "It's the story of one man and everything he touched," Simon tells me. That man is an unnamed federal agent whose life will be reflected in 42 individual artworks, each gesturing to the ripple-like consequences of his actions. The exhibition, made up of text, photographs, video, and sculpture, is dedicated to Simon's father, who lived all over the world and was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease before the full dimension of his life was evident to his daughter. The show "encompasses a vast range of themes," says Guggenheim curator of performance and media Nat Trotman, "but at its core it is about the way the life of one individual—which could be any of us—touches those of so many others, opening up a galaxy of stories."

Much of Simon's work is like this: startlingly intimate and powerfully political. In 2016 she filled the Park Avenue Armory with professional mourners, brought in from all over the world—a stunning installation, grief turned outward and monumental. Simon shows me one of her outfits, its apron embroidered with a name. One of the mourners made it for her—a trace of her art quietly making its way into what she wears.—CHLOE SCHAMA



CLOSET CASE

A skirt with suspenders and a balloon-sleeve blouse constitute Simon's daily ensemble. Here, a dozen examples from her collection.

LEG UP

A new generation of women designers is reinventing the slim look of American denim.

By Jane Herman.

Tight, body-hugging jeans are nothing new. By the time I began grappling with them, circa 2008, they'd long been associated with James Dean's sex symbol status and the rock-rebel style of punk icons like Debbie Harry. Still, when *skinnies,* as we called them, came back into fashion in the aughts, I was both shocked and confused. Here was this fit, so daring and so specific, that clung to the curves of our legs like cellophane. For me, uncomfortable didn't even begin to describe it. As someone whose whole life had been anchored by denim (my dad is the former LA retailer Ron Herman; *jeans are in our genes* was the joke), I felt unmoored, questioning not only my weight but the shape of all my tops. I wrote about my denim anxiety in this same space just shy of 20 years ago, declaring skinny jeans a "tricky little trend" and wondering how I'd deal with it—or if it would even last.

Of course, skinny jeans didn't just last; they dominated for more than a decade—I dealt with it by avoiding them in favor of foolproof 501s, more slim than skinny—until denim's reliable 10-ish-year pendulum swung in the other direction, toward wider legs and looser fits. So why a comeback now? Part of it, of course, is the simple desire for newness. One never *needs* a new pair of jeans every season: They're jeans; they're made to last a long time. The rumblings of a return to skinnies started when Miuccia Prada showed little low-riders in Miu Miu's fall 2024 collection. In truth, it was too soon and too tight, even for an audience who wore compression-level stretch denim not that long ago. Today, I suspect we're picking up where we left off right before the sweatpant-centric pandemic seemed to slam the door on anything clingy with a restrictive fit.

Flash back for a moment to Hedi Slimane's '70s-inspired spring 2020 collection for Celine, which landed in stores just as COVID hit. That type of jean—high on the waist, pipe-shaped down the leg, and authentic-looking (i.e., made of 100 percent cotton)—is now having a renaissance and, compared to baggies and barrels, feels powerful and smart. I loved it then and I love it now. It makes me think of Nili Lotan's Joan, one of the best straight legs on the planet today.

"I don't like to use the word *skinny,*" says designer Jac Cameron, who has the niche and increasingly popular Agnes jean in her line, Rùadh (pronounced "*roo*-ah"). A mid-rise style with a button fly, lean leg, and a little slit at the hem's outseam, Agnes is trim but "definitely not a legging vibe," Cameron explains. The game changer:

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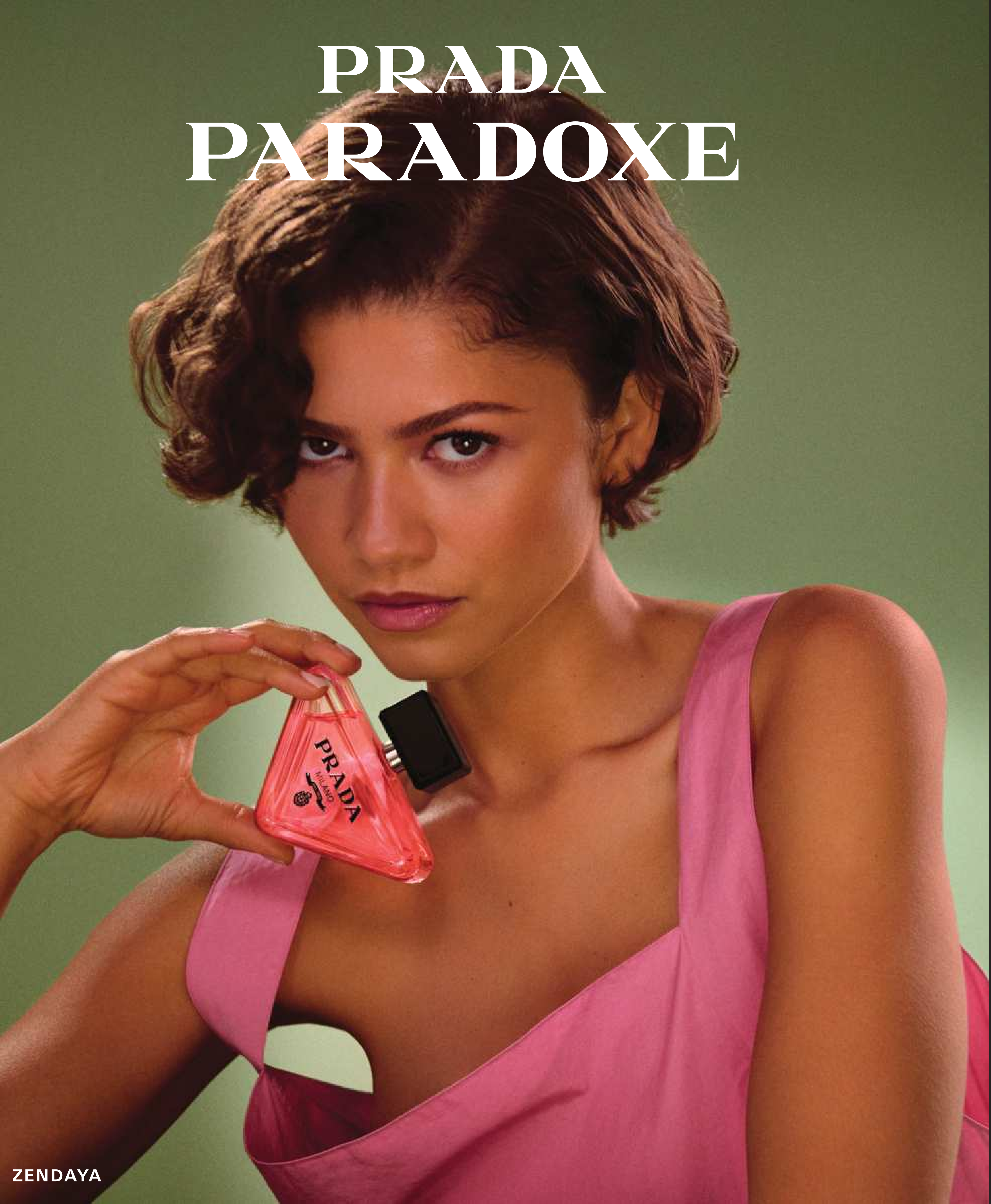
NOT FADE AWAY
Adut Akech goes long and lean in Dsquared2 jeans. Photographed by Tyler Mitchell for *Vogue,* April 2020.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TYLER MITCHELL. *VOGUE,* APRIL 2020. ART PARTNER/TRUNK ARCHIVE.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Ossou (“*oh*-sue”) designers Nina Khosla and Talia Shuvalov agree. “It’s not about the resurgence of the spray-on jean,” Shuvalov says. “It’s about creating something that’s tailored and refined, that still has a bit of air around the leg but offers you this slim effect.” Ossou’s Noon jean—a non-stretch high-rise with a cinched waist and more tapered leg—evokes the Lady Levi’s jeans of the 1930s, which the May 1935 edition of this magazine declared *the* thing to wear while vacationing in what was then called the Far West. (I repeat: Tighter jeans are nothing new.)

But while these new jeans are all technically slim, they are absolutely not the same. Even within the trend, there’s real variety, which is so much more inviting than the deep sea of same old skinnies we got swept away in last time. “The whole thing is just straighter,” says Aflalo’s Yael Aflalo about her best-selling Brontë. It’s extremely lean top-to-bottom compared to Noon and Agnes. “We’ve kept the more classic denim measurements—narrow waistband, longer fly—and fine-tuned the shape of the leg,” she explains. (In denim-speak, *classic* typically implies a 501 fit. That Hailey Bieber’s been seen wearing bum-hugging vintage Levi’s recently is not a coincidence.)

Even within the trend, there’s real variety, which is so much more inviting than the deep sea of same old skinnies we got swept away in last time

“I think it’s easier for people to take a slimmer silhouette back than it was for them to accept it the first time around,” says Jamie Haller, a 2026 CFDA/*Vogue* Fashion Fund finalist whose namesake line has two exceptional formfitting styles: the Slim Stovepipe and the Low. Also—and this is important—a lean silhouette is now far from the only option. Haller still has a Slouch and a Bell Crop, for example. Slim, barrel, bootcut, wide-leg, low-rise, high-rise, flared…. We’re living in a moment where all fits can be heroes.

There’s one more important shift in the landscape that you may have noticed: Many of the brands making the new cuts are led by women—a welcome change from the male designers dominating the all-skinny world of the 2010s. Haller, who worked at Guess and NSF before launching her own line, and Cameron, who cut her teeth at Calvin Klein and cofounded AYR, are now running their own shows, and they’re not alone: An entire generation of creative hard-workers who embarked on their careers during the premium denim boom of the early 2000s—and even *made* those male-gaze skinnies of the 2010s—has now stepped into their own.

But starting a jeans line is one thing. Nailing it—as these women have—is something else. Their edge: A closeness to the fit that men, no matter how skilled or legendary they may be, simply cannot own. Aflalo wear-tests everything. Cameron is in direct communication with her customers via text. Haller is her own fit model. It may sound obvious, but a subjective eye is insightful. The connection converts—and finally, with great enthusiasm (relief, even), I’m embracing the change. □

WORLD’S STAGE

A new interpretation of *The Cherry Orchard* lands in New York.

Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, written at the start of the 20th century, hinges on a specific moment in Russian history—the decline of the aristocracy and the rise of a middle class. Can you transplant that to 21st-century Seoul? Such was the challenge writer and director Simon Stone, who brings his interpretation to Manhattan’s Park Avenue Armory this month, set for himself. “I looked at that society,” Stone says of contemporary Korea, “and the way that power trickles down. It felt like imperial Russia.”

This *Cherry Orchard* is more *Parasite* than Stanislavski—offering a novel spin on the class dynamics of the original. “All of those lines about the aging nanny who’s still living with the family, the housekeeper, the chauffeur that’s just a little bit of an idiot but they keep him in the family—all of that stuff happens in Korea,” says Stone, who is known for working in languages not native to him. This production will be performed in Korean with English subtitles—with Park Hae-soo (*Squid Game*) and Jeon Do-yeon (a Cannes winner for 2007’s *Secret Sunshine*) in starring roles, both making their New York stage debuts. Stone asserts that Chekhov’s comedy transcends any vernacular: “A lot of jokes are funny because people know what it’s like to have a mother that nags them.”

Stone has a roving, transnational background. This play, he says, was adapted “by a Swiss-born, Austrian-residing Australian for Korean actors, some of whom have never left Korea.” He’s also known for upending theatrical convention. His provocative 2018 interpretation of Federico García Lorca’s *Yerma* became a modern fertility parable; a startling 2020 *Medea* with Rose Byrne and Bobby Cannavale placed the tragedy on a disorientingly bright white stage, the better to distill its impact. Here he is working with the avant-garde architectural designer Saul Kim (in Kim’s theatrical debut) to erect a cutaway building—seen at left—illuminated like a giant dollhouse. No matter the cultural background, family dysfunction is entertaining to observe.—CHLOE SCHAMA

PHOTO: STUDIO AL. © LG ARTS CENTER.

ISABEL
MARANT

ISABEL MARANT

WHAT IF...

your feet stopped
counting the minutes
until you got home.

WHAT IF...

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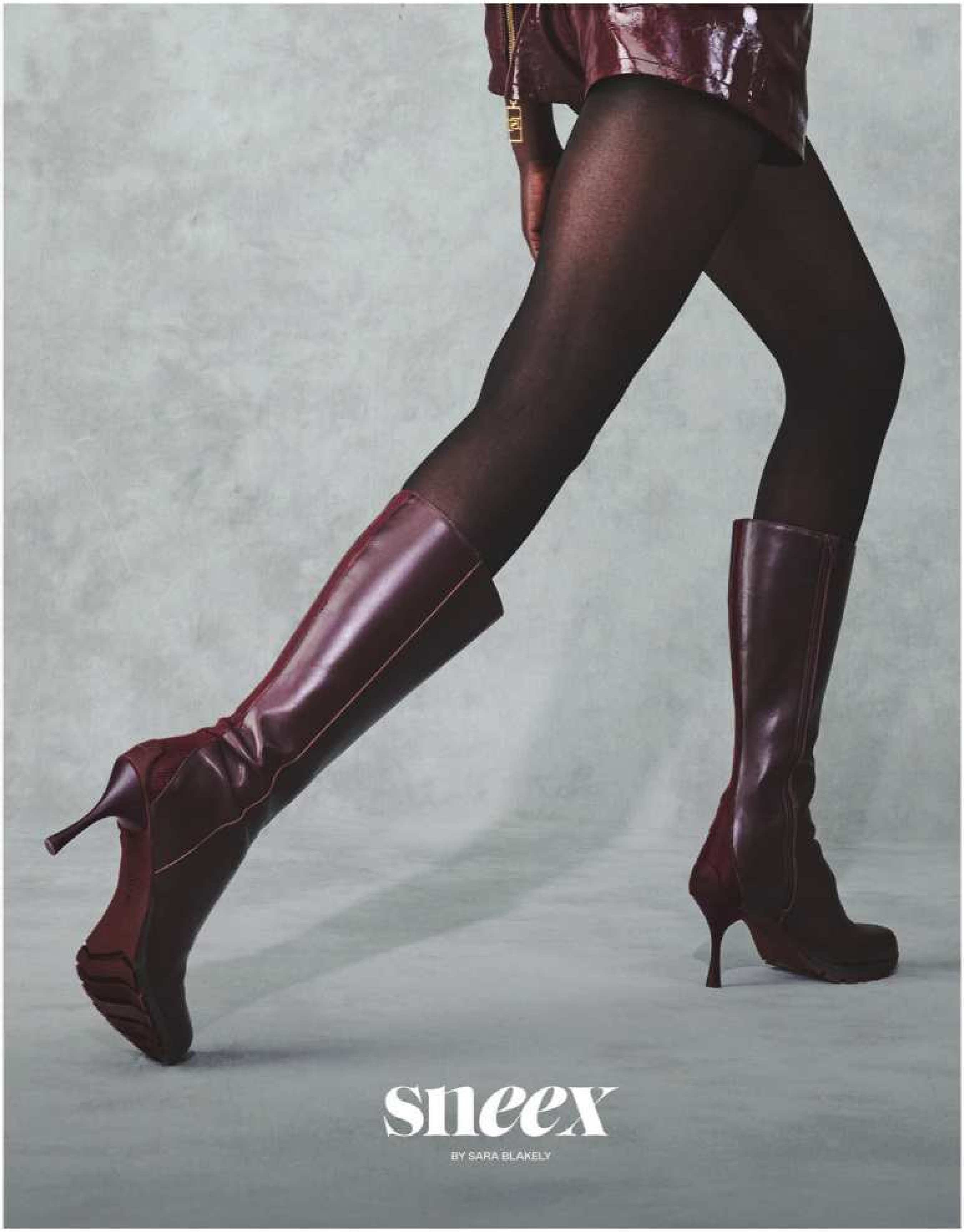
than a stiletto.

WHAT IF...

your heels were designed
by people who
actually wear them.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WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

Is the best design no design at all?
Chloe Schama digs into chaos gardening.

Recently, reels of time-lapse flower beds have surfaced on my phone's screen: humble patches of dirt, tilled between the siding of a house and a stretch of lawn, rapidly transformed into a riot of color, a feast of bobbing blossoms. This is "chaos gardening"—a social-media-fueled movement that has been gaining traction among a certain kind of gardener wanting to stage a small-scale rebellion against the strictures of horticulture on a patch of dirt. No need for planning, plotting, skill, or experience. You don't even need to step into a nursery; a dusty packet of seeds from the hardware store will do.

Chaos gardening is a few steps removed from the free-form, untamed idea of the English garden aesthetic that might seem its spiritual antecedent. It's not even really akin to the modern-meadow movement, which emphasizes native plants and ecological restoration and usually involves considered deployment of specific species. Rather, the practice puts faith in chance, whim, and inspiration. It embraces serendipity and celebrates mistakes. In one TikTok video (with 4.6 million views and counting), a gardener who goes by The Chaos Gardener describes her four-year-old daughter's adventure with a purloined packet of sunflower seeds, which she surreptitiously planted in her sandpit—resulting in the tallest and sturdiest stalk her mother had ever seen. "Here's the trick," says popular TikTok gardener Farm Boy James, while flinging handfuls of dried lentils and black-eyed peas over his shoulder, "there isn't a trick."

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I PREDICT A RIOT
Where a handful of seeds, improvisation, chance, and whimsy collide, a (social media friendly) garden may grow.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALLAN POLLOK-MORRIS. *VOGUE*, DECEMBER 2014.

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My own backyard adventures have been less chaotic: trips to the garden store with a budget and a palette in mind, sketches and lists with staggered bloom cycles considered. But every book I've read or class I've taken has elicited both a sense of encouragement and intimidation regarding the vast array of knowledge still beyond my reach. There are parts of gardening that can feel intuitive (water when dry) and parts that feel almost paradoxical. It took a firm rosarian at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden to persuade me to hack my rose vines down to spindly shin-level spears, denuded of crisscrossing branches. "Trust me," she said, "they're going to love it."

So there was something undeniably appealing about throwing caution to the wind. A neighbor friend has a field of echinacea flowers in her front yard that by mid-summer looks like hundreds of emojis have popped up to flank her stoop, drunk-seeming bumblebees buzzing between them. She had read all the Piet Oudolf books, she told me, but when it came time to plant, she just tossed handfuls of seeds in the air. Could I transform a bare little corner of my backyard with the same spirit of abandon?

PURE ABANDON

A stairway at Gravetye Manor in England, a century-old garden that is considered a precursor to the modern, naturalistic aesthetic.

At the gardening store I bought packets of blackberry lily, cardinal climber, lobelia, aster, echinacea, lavender, and thyme seeds. At the last minute I added a packet of outhouse hollyhock, a plant so deemed because it has been known to grow tall and dense enough that it can create a screen for outdoor facilities. No privy in my backyard, but the bulky plastic compost wheel could use some camouflage. How did this selection rank according to my typical measures? Were these native? Not really, it turned out when I googled them later. Invasive? Oops, maybe a little, in some cases. I had planned to divide the plot—one half sown spontaneously, the other benefiting from more attention paid to spacing—but my own four-year-old daughter seemed to sense that approach was not in keeping with the spirit of the endeavor and proceeded to scatter at will. At the last minute I remembered that Ffern, the delectable organic fragrance company, had sent me a packet of cornflower, lady's bedstraw, and red campion with its newest, very pleasing seasonal scent, so I threw that in too. About 27 seconds later we were done. We gently trod on the soil, gave it a spray of water, and walked away.

There are, of course, complications that one doesn't need to venture too far into this trend to discover. The question of density, for starters—a lot of the videos involve flung fistfuls, the way an enthusiastic chef might salt a pot of water for pasta. More is more! Then you read the fine print on a packet of thyme seeds, each smaller than a poppy seed, and find out it is meant to cover up to 233 square feet. Assuming these plants sprout, you're supposed to thin them—a nice way of saying "kill your darlings"—if they are denser than a few inches apart. "It feels like infanticide," says noted gardener Jo Thompson, author of *The New Romantic Garden* (2025), when I call her for advice. Thompson's style has always been somewhat akin to chaos gardening—a bit unruly, a bit disordered, and more welcoming because of it. "I liked the idea that it was not all about me," she says. "I wanted to guide the garden and invite a sense of spontaneity." She likes plants that "look after themselves," she adds. Let nature take its course with minimal intervention.

There is ancient wisdom to the idea of cultivating plant diversity—the "three sister" crops (corn, beans, and squash) have long been grown in proximity to maximize yields. In fact, the term *chaos garden* has been traced back to farmer and writer Gabe Brown, author of *Dirt to Soil* (2018), who describes a regenerative experiment that began almost as a dare: He took a total of 70 species (including cover crops like cowpeas and soybeans, as well as vegetables and flowers) and spread them over a 30-acre field. Even though the conditions were not optimal that year, the process generated a thriving kitchen garden for him and his wife. "Shelly would send me to pick a vegetable for supper and whatever I tripped over was what I would bring home," Brown writes. Thompson, in her own garden, has been growing salvia near her roses—an approach that utilizes the natural fungicidal properties of salvia's leaves.

We know that plant diversity creates not only a more productive environment but a more stable and pollinator-friendly one. Having a variety of plants might help you prevent weeds and offer some natural pest protection. And this is an important consideration for even the most amateur backyard gardener: Recent research has shown that diversity-encouraging interventions in smaller-scale gardens had a disproportionately greater effect than in larger-scale gardens. "I don't like the term *chaos gardening*," the ecologist Douglas Tallamy tells me—he feels that it implies visions of unruliness. But he stresses the responsibility that anyone with even a tiny plot of earth should feel. "If people have a little garden that's a few square feet and the rest of it is a giant lawn," he says, "they're not doing anything with it." He points out that there are about 40 million acres of lawn in America—an area roughly the size of Washington State. If chaos gardening gets people accustomed to the idea of doing more than ceding their property to a landscaping company, then the benefits might go beyond a feel-good social media movement.

Within a week, my daughter came running to tell me that a shoot had emerged on my bare patch of Brooklyn dirt. It was a bit too soon for any of the seeds we had planted to sprout, but something had apparently drifted over and gotten a head start. I pulled out my plant identification app, but the leaves were tiny; it was too early to figure out what had taken root. The first resident of our chaos garden was a surprise, it seemed—what a delight indeed. □

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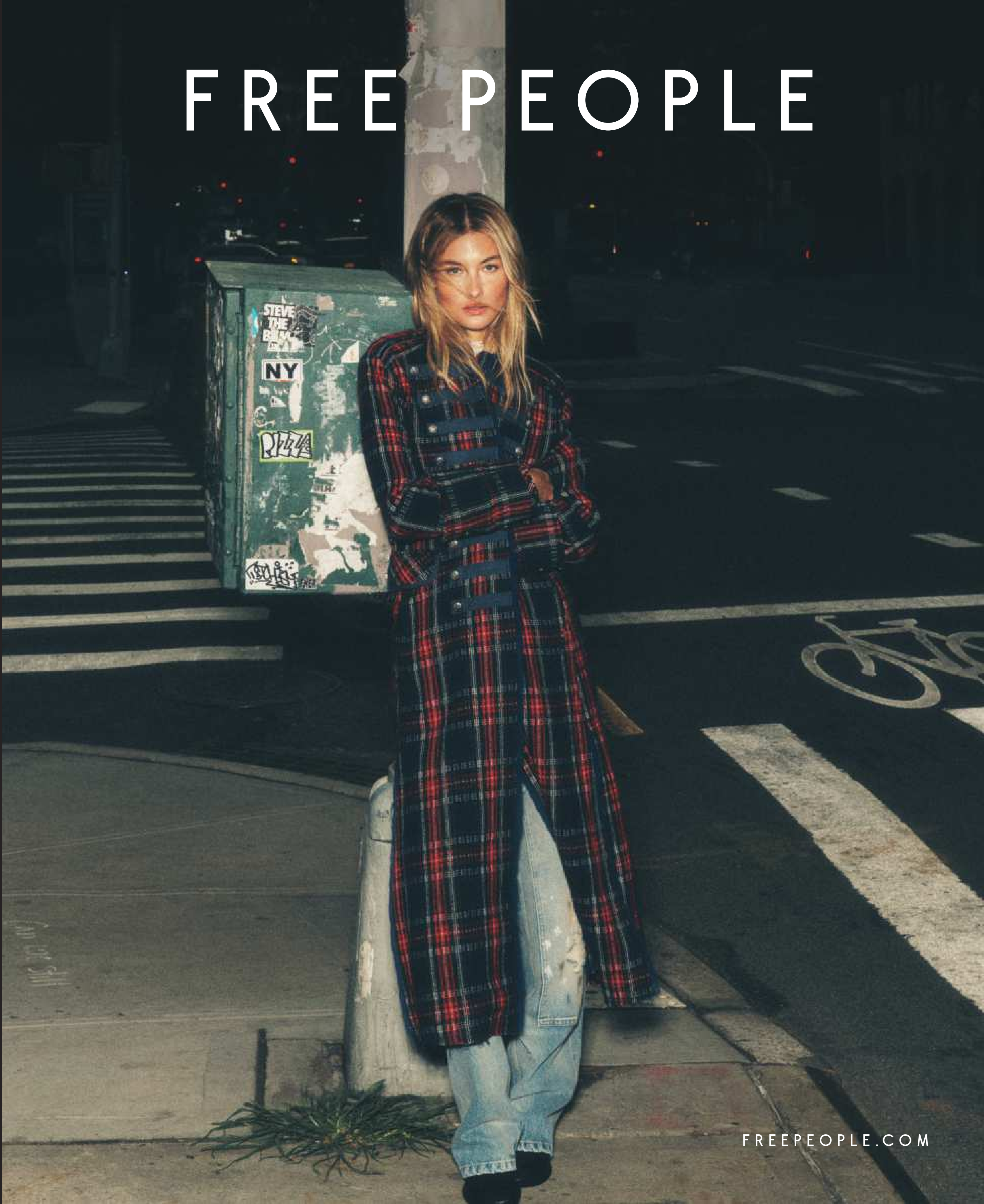

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COMFORTABLY NUMB

Can we improve our mood by freezing our faces? Maya Singer explores the new frontiers of the mind-body connection.

I was feeling bad, so I decided to get Botox. To be clear, I wasn't feeling bad about my face. Life in general was getting me down. I was weary, exhausted by the effort of ignoring the worrisome thoughts pinging around my head. I felt futile. I was beset by ambient dread. Thus, Botox. One sleepless night, I'd tumbled down an internet rabbit hole, reemerging with a handful of studies with byzantine titles like "Botulinum Toxin Therapy for Psychiatric Disorders in Clinical Practice: A Retrospective Case Study," suggesting Botox as a treatment for depression. The reason for this was hilariously straightforward: Botox—or any neuromodulator—inhibits frowning. That's it. That's the whole deal. It seemed worth trying.

Off I went to Weiser Skin MD in SoHo. I could have gotten a jab from one of the walk-in clinics popping up all over town—injection, the new mani-pedi!—but, as this was a matter of mental health, it seemed prudent to seek out a prestigious medical professional. Depression and anxiety "are serious conditions best managed by psychiatrists and/or psychologists," cautioned Jessica Weiser, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and Weiser Skin's founder and medical director. But, she added: "Patients do note that they feel more confident and relaxed after treatment." I asked the gracious Alessandra Haskin, MD, to aim for the "high end of minimal" as she prepared a needle for the muscles that lower the corners of the mouth. That was for good measure. The locus of scientific interest is the glabella, the region between the eyebrows where frown lines appear. I'd have to wait two weeks to witness the treatment's full effect.

As I waited, I asked myself: Do I feel more confident? Do I feel more relaxed? People kept telling me how great I looked; that was uplifting. I also wondered if I was turning into a psychopath. Perhaps you've seen the meme: A client, sitting in a doctor's office, points to his or her glabella: "Just go for the empathy part," says the Botoxee. "Of course, it's our bestseller," replies the injector. A little one-scene comedy responding to research suggesting that Botox curtails a person's capacity to "experience" the inner life of another.

The data on this is intriguing. One much-cited 2011 study showed that "emotion perception was significantly impaired" by Botox. In another, from 2023, researchers scanned women's brains pre- and post-Botox and found that suppressing the glabellar region could affect "the processing of emotional faces." This is a narrow sampling of the research; there are "several well-documented effects," according to Fernando Marmolejo-Ramos, PhD, an experimental psychologist based at Flinders University in Australia. Botox has been shown to inhibit emotional apprehension, Marmolejo-Ramos explains; Botoxees are "missing the subtext."

The scientific logic comes down to one essential: Our expressions both convey and sway our emotions. "Think of your face as a two-way street," Marmolejo-Ramos says. Emotion flows from brain to face, but there's also a "return signal," he elaborates, "and this bodily feedback helps us actually feel emotions." I frown because I'm sad—but it's also the reflex to frown that tells me I'm sad. Botox, immobilizing facial muscles, frustrates this signaling back and forth.

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FROWN UPSIDE-DOWN

Some research posits that inhibiting our ability to knit our brow can have spirit-boosting effects.

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The result is a flattening of affect or "a subtle but measurable blunting of how the person processes, experiences, and reads emotion."

In the 1990s, the discovery of "mirror neurons" underlined that we subconsciously mimic each other, down to our tiniest facial expressions. These micro-expressions often escape cognition and are processed solely through simulation. So it follows that the more frozen your face, the less likely you are to clock that someone is anxious or lying to you or quietly amused. And if you're too frozen to take someone fully in, wouldn't it be harder for anyone to empathize with you?

"Go for the empathy part." A strange joke, if you think about it. But what makes the joke land is its kernel of sincerity, the idea that life might be easier, more frictionless, if we weren't troubled by the feelings of others. We live in an age of self-optimization; is lack of empathy somehow optimal? Does a cruel world require a cold heart and a frozen face?

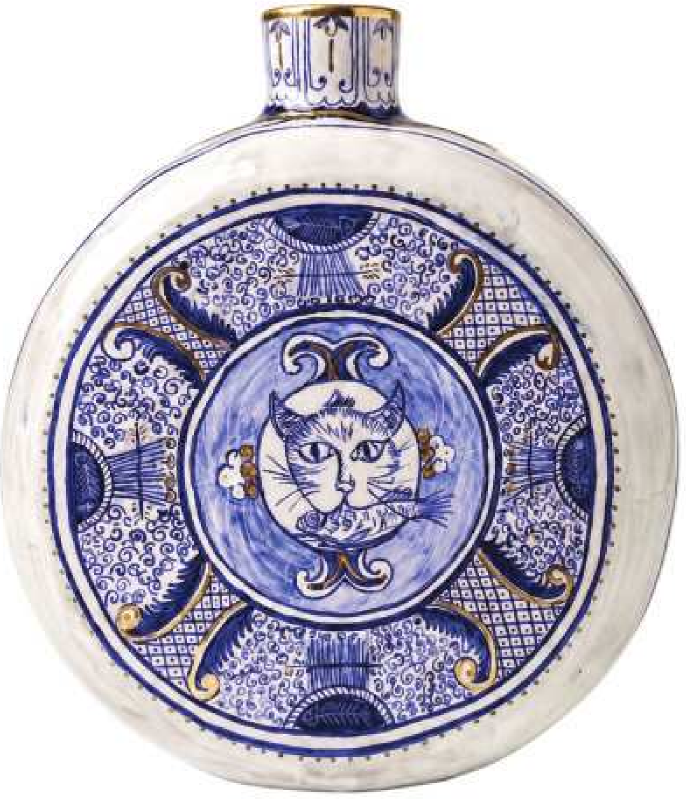
"It's fascinating—it seems like a concerted effort to appear airbrushed," muses 36 North Moore Dermatology founder Evan Rieder, MD, of the intervention-forward, avatar-like aesthetic common on social media. "But I do not believe it's the result of a conscious attempt to achieve emotional blunting," he adds. Rieder, who is board-certified in both dermatology and psychiatry, is skeptical of the research—sure, *something* is happening at a psychological or emotional level when we get Botoxed, but not to a degree that would make a difference in the average person's life. "It's been sensationalized," he says.

And the jury is still out—way out—on Botox's efficacy as a mood-booster. "We looked closely at all the evidence and didn't find it compelling," says Jeff Larsen, professor of psychology and neuroscience at University of Tennessee and the coauthor of a 2021 meta-analysis of studies about Botox's effect on depression. Sample sizes were small; results were frequently improbable. "When it comes to momentary feelings, 10 seconds, maybe up to a minute, facial expression [for example, smiling] can have a *little* effect on how I'm feeling," Larsen says. As far as Botox improving my mood, "you're better off looking at cute puppy videos on YouTube."

This effect, too, is fleeting. I cued "30 Minutes of the World's CUTEST Puppies!" Half an hour later, my mood was about the same. But I did not, could not, frown. This had no perceptible impact on my cheeriness. The boost I got from Botox was that I liked my face a bit better, a result I'd have anticipated without reading umpteen scientific reports. That's not nothing, but as I said up top, my face was never the problem.

> "Think of your face as a two-way street," psychologist Fernando Marmolejo-Ramos says. Emotion flows from brain to face, but there's also a "return signal"

The sense of constant crisis in the news and the developments in AI that are guiding us, rapidly, into terra incognita can make it difficult to see over any horizon beyond next week. And despair, it's been said, comes of the inability to conceive or construct a future. Hence: ambient dread. For me, at least. But philosophers have long had an antidote for this state of mind: the cocreation of a future by means of a hyperfocus on the present, doing the human stuff no AI will ever be able to do—sharing joy, giving someone a hug. Empathy, in other words. ChatGPT can't help my elderly neighbor carry her groceries up the stairs. It's a small thing, but more effective than Botox in quieting my mind and lightening my mood. *Care.* That's it. That's the whole deal. It seems worth trying. □



BREAKING THE MOLD

Hollywood designer Tina Charad goes analog with ceramics.

Tina Charad first knew she wanted to work in film when she saw Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet.* "I was blown away," she recalls. "The visual tapestry—it was just so rich." Several decades into a career as a graphic designer for film and television, she has conjured everything from the Technicolor grit of 1969 Los Angeles for Quentin Tarantino's *Once Upon a Time…in Hollywood* to modern interiors for Nancy Meyers. The job requires deep research, rigor, and skill—and, ideally, all this effort goes unnoticed.

Charad, 51, says that she has long had a perfectionist streak. But these days she's fighting that instinct, creating bowls, plates, vases, and other vessels that reflect a looser aesthetic. Her usual digital precision has no place here: "I took up ceramics to get off the computer," she says. She counts the artists Jennifer Rochlin, Hylton Nel, and Daisy Makeig-Jones (a 20th-century pottery designer for Wedgwood) among her influences. And, aesthetically, more is more. "I've never met a pattern I didn't love." A selection of her wares is sold at Pierce & Ward, the Los Angeles design studio known for modern heirlooms, and in 2027 she will have an exhibition at Knysna Fine Art in Knysna, South Africa.

Incorporating lines of text—akin to little poems—Charad aims to craft a humorous record of the present on the surface of her work. "The ceramic is the vehicle to tell this absurd little story," she says. And there is suspense in ceramics, just as in film: "Is this going to not break? Is this going to still stand up?" she says. "Maybe. Maybe not."—**ANNA GRACE LEE**

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OFF THE WALL
Zoe Latta and Mike Eckhaus were inspired by J.Crew's early, legendary catalogs.

COURTESY OF J.CREW.

SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS

A new collaboration with Eckhaus Latta lends a sweet subversion to J.Crew's elevated staples. By Max Berlinger.

Zoe Latta's first recollection of J.Crew is from middle school, when she came across a Technicolor men's hand-knit sweater in one of the brand's legendary early catalogs. "It was just insane-looking," she recalls, "so many different colors, so Waspy—and *cool*." It changed the way the Northern California native, who grew up in a decidedly more bohemian milieu, saw the brand. "It was this burst-open American point of view," she says. "It really blew my mind."

That very sweater served as a touchpoint for J.Crew's new collaboration with Eckhaus Latta, the label that Latta oversees alongside her design partner, Mike Eckhaus (whose own first memory of the brand is of wearing the same J.Crew sweater vest as a classmate for their middle school book report on *The Catcher in the Rye*). Since founding Eckhaus Latta 15 years ago, they've built a mystique as scrappy downtown darlings specializing in a gritty, modern version of American sportswear, all earthy funk and sleek subversion.

If the linkup seems unexpected, well—that's the whole point. "We really celebrate the everyday," says Olympia Gayot, J.Crew's creative director and head of womenswear, "and then they come and add a twist, a tension. That's very exciting for us."

How else could J.Crew give us a chunky-knit skirt suit in a flecked acid yellow, like some wayward cousin of Chanel? (Latta says she was looking for "gross" colors, including a "puke green.") Elsewhere, there's a riff on the ladylike twinset, in striped cashmere, frisky in its cropped proportions; and classic oxford shirts, now slashed up the back, featuring a deep, overlapping vent. "Some things felt very us, others felt very J.Crew," Latta says of working together. "If it was one or the other, we'd get rid of it or push it toward the middle. Nothing that's in here feels preposterous to me. There's a person for all of it."

"There's this foundation with Eckhaus Latta of denim, jersey, and knitwear," Eckhaus says. "And I could say the same of J.Crew—they're just realized differently."

While he and Latta have made their name with wide-cut denim dyed in murky shades; shaggy, sculptural knits; and shirting with sexy-strange cutouts, in recent years their work has gained a finesse that comes with experience, and now includes handsome leathers and more streamlined silhouettes. Much like J.Crew's elevated staples, these are real clothes worn by real people in their real lives—though from the start, Eckhaus Latta has attracted a coterie of creative types (e.g., indie actors, gallerists) who often sit in their fashion shows' front row and, occasionally, are persuaded to walk their runway.

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THE POWER OF AN EYE

Photography by François Nars

NARS's Notorious Mascara marks a new era for the iconic beauty brand.

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Photographs by Marc Regas

Beauty begins with vision: the ability to see what others miss, to recognize possibility, and to transform a face into an image that lingers long after the camera clicks. Since collaborating on his first *Vogue* cover in 1985, makeup artist and NARS founder François Nars has worked alongside legendary photographers and designers to help define the visual mood of an era—one in which supermodels channeled an unmatched sense of energy, joy, and confidence.

Now, François Nars turns his eye to Kaia Gerber. In an homage to iconic *Vogue* covers of the past, the model of the moment stars in the campaign for NARS' new Notorious Mascara.

For François, the connection runs deeper than nostalgia. Gerber is "a supermodel of today who carries with her the spirit of another era," he says. Photographing her felt like "reliving the magic" of the original supers—a return to the optimism, artistry, and creative energy that first drew him to the industry and inspired some of fashion's most enduring makeup looks.

That same philosophy finds its latest expression in Notorious Mascara. Delivering eye-opening lift, length, and defined volume with a lightweight feel, the all-in-one formula feels delightfully next generation. For Gerber, the collaboration carries its own sense of history. NARS was "the very first makeup brand I ever bought," she says, adding that working with François was "both surreal and profoundly special."

It's the kind of effortless déjà vu that only a true artist can imbue. After all, beauty isn't just about what you see—it's about how you see it. And the magic you continue to create.

Discover the new NARS Notorious Mascara, available at Ulta.

NARS

POWER TRIO
J.Crew's Olympia Gayot with Zoe Latta and Mike Eckhaus. "We celebrate the everyday," Gayot says, "and then they come and add a twist, a tension."

"What defines their brand is not only what they design, but the world that they build around it," observes Gayot, recalling a show where the casting director held a model's baby as she traipsed the catwalk, or the time a gaggle of friends provided full-throated musical accompaniment. "It's not pretentious—it's familial, it's beautiful, it's downtown," she continues. "It's like all of those things that you look at as an outsider, and you're like, 'I want to be part of that world.'"

Their 27-piece collaboration, which includes men's, women's, and children's pieces, comes on the heels of a smaller project earlier this year in which Eckhaus Latta reimagined J.Crew's signature roll-neck sweater, rendering it in earth-toned patches. The entire run sold out in a few hours. "We're not a hype brand—we're not used to putting something out and having it be gone," Eckhaus says. "But selling out that quickly was really fulfilling, and being able to expand that into a full collection feels exciting in a whole different way."

A lot of the work happened at J.Crew headquarters in downtown Manhattan, amid mood boards pinned with old campaign images, fabric swatches, and new sketches. "There's just so much inspiration," Eckhaus says of mining the J.Crew archives. "There's this wealth of things to explore and riff off of, and then subvert and digest and play with in a way that feels us."

"We had to keep asking, Does this still speak to the J.Crew customer?" Eckhaus continues. "How do you push the silhouette without it feeling alienating? How do you make it feel cool and very now while still being wearable?" Funnily enough, the collection as a whole embodies what Latta first felt all those years ago while flipping through the pages of a J.Crew catalog—an American perspective that isn't singular, but expansive, that somehow captures something ineffable about our kaleidoscopic sense of self. □

FRESH AS FABRIC

The new scents stitch together unusual influences.

SWEET SHEETS
Some materials, like cashmere, have long been a fragrance note, but what about cotton, linen, or silk?

Nose-deep in a nylon Prada shoulder bag is a strange way to start a Saturday morning in SoHo. But after taking a subtle whiff inside the purse—and hoping no one in the downtown Manhattan store was taking note—I sniff my wrist. Earlier, I had spritzed on Prada Beauty's latest scent, Nylon Noir. Sharp when it hits the nose, it reminds me of the sound that nylon makes when it rubs against itself.

We all know what tulle, satin, and wool look like—but how do they smell? That's what the latest fragrances are exploring. These aren't leather scents (new cars, edgy jackets, saddles), which have been done since 1781, when The House of Creed first made Royal English Leather for King George III. Instead, think of opening the doors to a fashion house's workshop and experiencing the materials. "Indigo is inspired by denim," Andrea Maack says of the newest perfume from her namesake company, which deploys notes of lavender, orris, and musk. It smells like how it feels to pull on my favorite pair of almost-too-tight vintage Gloria Vanderbilt jeans.

I find, as I test these new fragrances, that I gravitate toward those that match my outfit. A nipped-in 1950s fit and flare dress requires a Dior scent influenced by the sharp angles of the New Look, while a wiggle sheath and feathered mules worn to an American Ballet Theatre matinee prompt me to reach for YSL Beauty's Velours, inspired by the lush velvet beloved by Yves Saint Laurent. And the limited edition porcelain bottle of Dries Van Noten's Soie Malaquais—or "Malaquais Silk"—is slinky and sexy enough for a night out in a slip dress. When I return home, even my bath-and-bed routine is fabric-inspired; Guerlain's Eau de Coton is a soft blend of almond and orange blossom that's equally cozy on my pajamas and my sheets. Party on, and party down.—MARGAUX ANBOUBA

GAYOT, LATTA, AND ECKHAUS: COURTESY OF J.CREW. BED: PHOTOGRAPHED BY IRVING PENN, *VOGUE*, JANUARY 1991.

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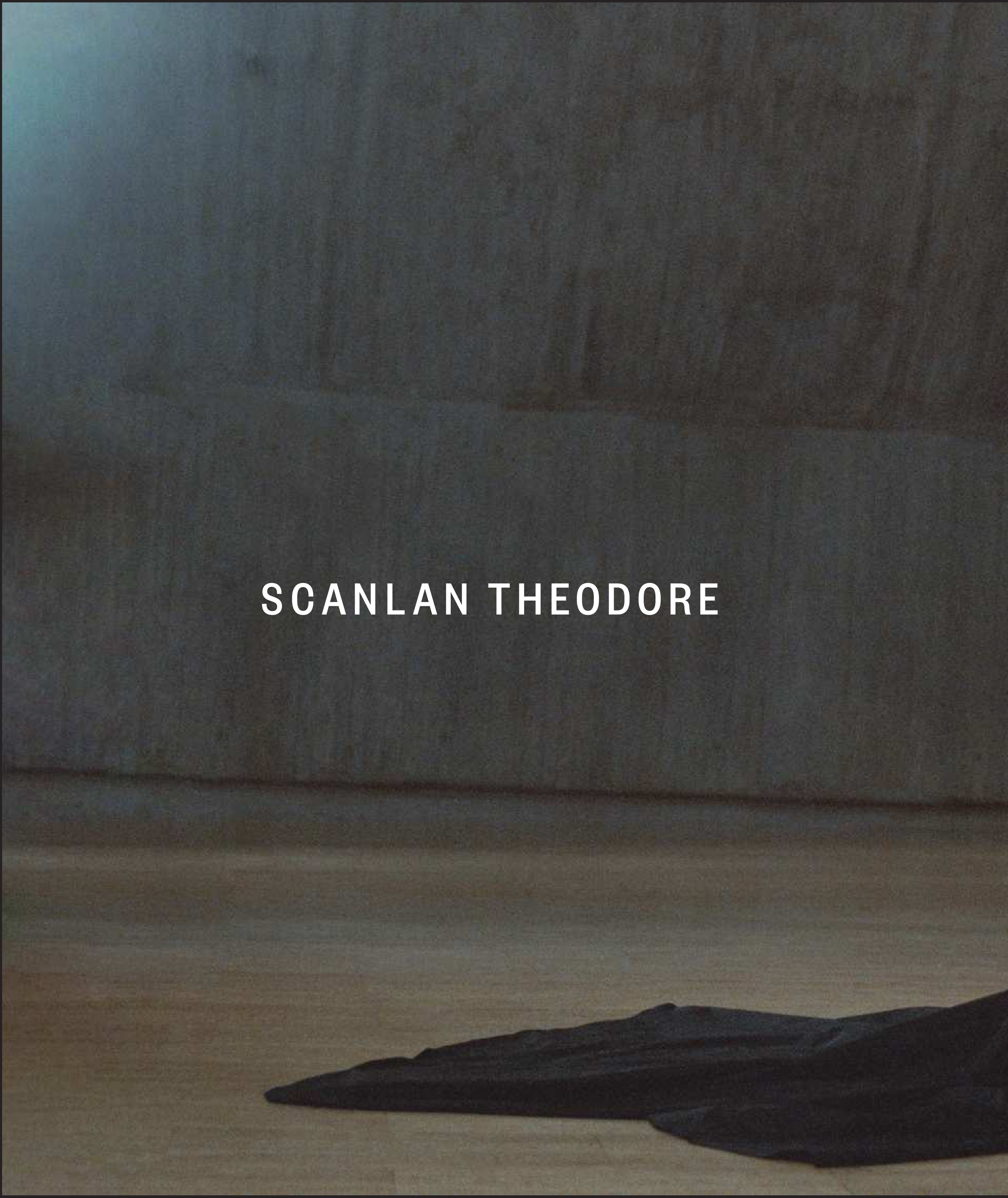

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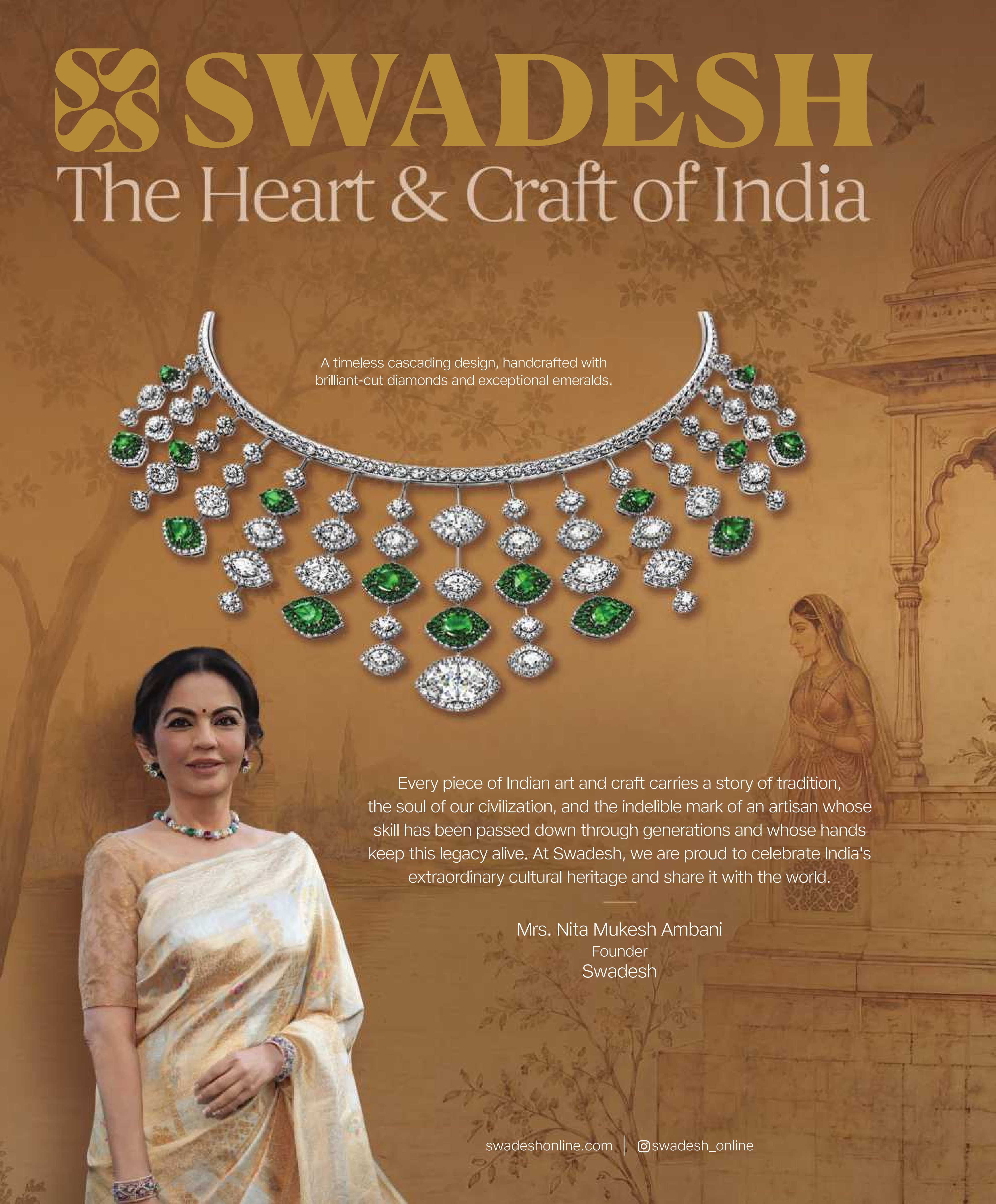

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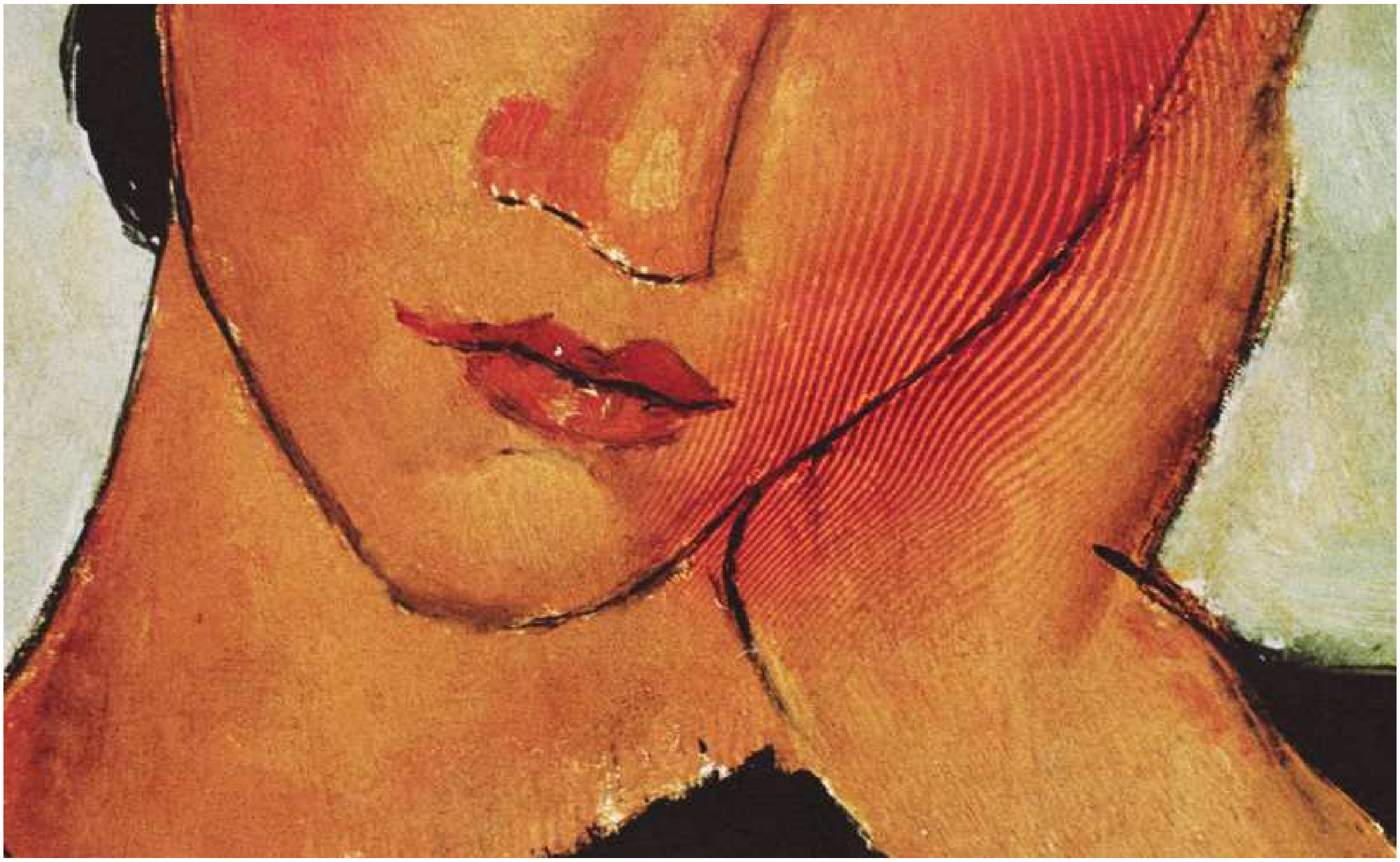
THE GRIND

A stiff upper lip can be brutal for your teeth. Alessandra Codinha unlearns how to grit and bear it.



UNDER PRESSURE

Clamping down, day and night, can wreak havoc on your teeth. Dentists are seeing people crack through materials meant to be indestructible.

I knew I was in trouble when the drill came out. “We’ve got an issue,” my dentist told me. “You’ve been clenching your jaw so hard you’re killing your tooth. Possibly multiple.” *Killing*?! Surely he was exaggerating: My dental records are historically cavity-free! And after a bout of COVID-era stress-grinding, I wear a night guard. “Pressure kills the nerve,” he explained, pointing at my X-ray and a cloudy molar interior. “You’ve been clamping down, probably at night, but also probably during the day. Were you aware of that?” Reader, I had a baby seven months before this conversation, and I read the news. Was I *aware* that I was *tense*? I *sure was*! I just didn’t think my teeth knew.

I’m not alone. Two partial crowns later, during a visit to my Los Angeles endodontist for the prescribed curative root canal required for a third, I learned that more and more patients are coming in with clenching and grinding calamities versus the traditional cavities that used to be the endodontist’s bread and butter. And then these patients are coming back. Since COVID, my endodontist had seen people cracking through fillings and crowns made out of material that’s supposed to be diamond-hard. He was considering offering masseter Botox injections to temporarily paralyze the largest jaw muscle for the worst repeat offenders. “I don’t think it’s a dentist’s place to give Botox, but I’m running out of ideas,” he told me.

In that, he is alone. It seemed that everywhere I looked, new businesses were cropping up to tackle the growing problem of our propensity to grin and bear it. A week later I was trying Emface, a high-intensity muscle-stimulation device that uses electromagnetic waves purportedly to retrain overactive facial and jaw muscles through a course of repeated sessions. What that looks like in practice is two stick-on pads attached to wires that cause your face to painlessly spasm for 20 minutes straight while you scroll on your phone. While I was lying there, a friend aware of my situation texted a link to a video of what appeared to be a woman being tortured but was in fact LeAnn Rimes getting her jaw worked on by a fascial maneuver coach.

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PHOTO: BURSTEIN COLLECTION/CORBIS/VCG/GETTY IMAGES.
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(These are experts in body work that targets the connective tissue which wraps around the body's muscles and organs.) I watched the singer bawl hysterically in—I guess—relief while I twitched, supine, behind a scrim in a Beverly Hills store window. Perhaps this all sounds ridiculous? There was a time I would have thought so. But that was before. I emailed LeAnn's fascia guy to see if they had any available slots. They did, but not many. "We're shooting our new TV show!" a rep wrote back.

He wasn't the only one who knew fascia. I enlisted sports medicine chiropractor Jenna Lagana, DC, for help. She specializes in performance rehab and has worked with multiple performing artists; singers, she told me, get jaw issues like baseball pitchers get elbow ones. Night guards intended to prevent grinding can sometimes compound clenching, she said. If presented with something to grip, even unconsciously, many jaws will. She assessed my situation manually: no clicking or popping or pain while chewing meant it wasn't a joint problem, but my jaw muscles were tight and aggrieved from overuse—a soft tissue issue. She applied pressure at various points around my skull and shoulders and did a sharply painful but ultimately relieving maneuver inside the upper corners of my mouth to get the hyperactive muscles there to relax a bit.

Once her hand was out of my mouth, I asked what she thought about Botox—would that let me skip a future of painful manual maneuvers? "I do *not* recommend that as an option," she told me. "It's not viable, it's not affordable long-term, and it's not a solution at all. I've never met anyone who's like, 'Oh yeah, *I got Botox one time and my jaw is totally better*.' What you need to do is find out what your stressors are," a.k.a. what's making me clench, "and how to mitigate those stressors and to improve the overall tone of your head, neck, jaw, all of that musculature." She recommended twice daily gua sha along the masseter, preferably with heat. And, you know, trying to *not* clench. "When you catch yourself doing it, put your tongue behind your upper teeth," Lagana's wife, Natazia zu Stolberg, a licensed acupuncturist, offered on my way out the door. "Remember, your teeth aren't supposed to touch unless you're chewing!" I practiced on my way to the car and realized that my teeth were *always* touching—a long-held horror of appearing slack-jawed may be subconsciously working against me.

> I realized that my teeth were *always* touching—a long-held horror of appearing slack-jawed may be subconsciously working against me

"Oh, that could totally factor in," integrative and functional medicine expert Sarah Corey, ND, told me on a call later that week. "Think about the messaging we get" about being strong and unflappable: stiff upper lip, set your jaw, all of that. "People are *stressed*," she said, and she pointed out that the jaw is historically a place where we feel the strain. Animals in high-intensity situations—being chased on the savanna, say—will physically shake or tremble as a stress response once they've reached safety; people who get a horrendous work email or are cursed out by a driver on the freeway don't have anywhere to dump all of that cortisol and adrenaline. And not to stress anybody out further, but high cortisol suppresses your immune system and increases inflammation, both of which lead to things like quicker aging and poor long-term health outcomes.

"I think we need to look at this as not just what's happening in that specific muscle," Corey told me. "Are there things that you feel like you're not saying or you're holding back? Are there boundaries that we're not creating? I think that's a big one for women." (To be fair, I hadn't slept uninterrupted in over a month, but how was I going to lecture my baby about boundaries?) "When you're stressed and worried you're in sympathetic overdrive, which means you stop being able to rest and digest," and your body can't repair itself or reset its nervous system. Breath work, she advised me, is actually the only way we can force ourselves into the parasympathetic. (And it's free!) She directed me to breathe in through the nose for four seconds, hold for seven, and exhale through the mouth for nine. (You don't even have to count or hold, a breath work coach told me later, you just have to exhale longer than you inhale.) Corey also recommended significantly upping my intake of omega-3s for mood and joint health, and nightly magnesium glycinate for improved sleep.

So I had a plan. But what about the things that had already gone haywire? "Dr. Annie! She changed my life," stylist and wellness fanatic Djuna Bel told me. Bel glows with a kind of rude Californian health and goes once a week for chiropractic adjustments, including of her jaw. At Glendale's Healthwise Chiropractic clinic, Annie Issagholyan, DC, took a series of X-rays and measurements to show me that the problem was actually not in my head. It was in my spine. Nervous system dysregulation plus postural problems lead to a whole suite of dysfunctions, Issagholyan explained. Two thirds of the patients who come to see her are there because of jaw dysregulation, she told me, though the specifics can vary widely. "With temporomandibular joint (or TMJ) dysfunction, it's very rare for just one thing to be the cause." Poor sleep positioning plus "tech neck" (a forward tilt so-named because it aims the eyes downward at a device) was putting exponential volumes of pressure on my spine, which was showing up in my jaw, but also in my shoulders and hips.

Issagholyan built out a 24-session plan to course-correct, involving twice weekly visits in which I would be chiropractically adjusted, my jaw cold-lasered to promote cellular regeneration and my back muscles stimulated by electrodes. I would also do a neck traction exercise where I was yoked to the wall for 20 tilted squats. She would manually release the medial and lateral pterygoids, the small muscles inside my mouth, which were the worst offenders. She would also adjust my mid-back, where some shoddy form while baby-lifting was showing up, and finish by realigning my neck. On the way out after that first visit, I received ice packs for my face and was measured for a new, carefully designed pillow that promised to keep my head level.

I followed the plan. Results were tender but steady. I found myself newly aware of how I was positioning my head on my neck and holding my phone while I looked at it. I took my supplements and began and ended the day with intentionally deep breathing. And I realized one day that I was getting better. On one visit, Issagholyan painlessly snapped my head back and forth and, as the volley of pops of my neck vertebrae realigned, I felt something relax at the top of my skull; when I got off the table it took me a minute before I realized my teeth weren't touching. Hours later they still weren't.

Partway through the program, I asked what the future held. Was there ever a point when I'd be done? "We will get you stable," Issagholyan said. But cured? It doesn't work like that. "You don't go to the gym for three months and then say, 'There, I did it!'" A former dancer with a physical job in a very stressful world, she herself gets adjusted once a week and sees it as an important part of what keeps her healthy and able. "But maybe if life gets less stressful we won't need all of this intervention." For that, I won't be holding my breath. □

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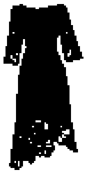


The Dewberry: *Modern Minimalist*

Clean lines, confident tailoring and a restrained palette. Think a sculptural black dress, architectural jewelry and an impeccably cut coat.

Shop the Look: ***Rhodes Boutique***

Hotel Bennett: *Grand Romantic*

Polished, feminine and unapologetically glamorous. Think blush silk, statement earrings, elegant heels and a beautifully structured handbag.

Shop the Look: ***Croghan's Jewel Box***

The Cooper: *Modern Icon*

Elegant without being predictable. Think a beautifully draped dress, polished accessories and one striking statement piece.

Shop the Look: ***Shoes on King***

The Pinch: *Downtown Creative*

Understated, design-conscious and effortlessly current. Think wide-leg trousers, an oversized blazer, leather flats and an artful accessory.

Shop the Look: ***The Tiny Tassel***

The Spectator Hotel: *Classic Tailoring*

Timeless, discreet and finished with precision. Think a crisp white shirt, tailored trousers, loafers and an heirloom watch.

Shop the Look: ***Beau & Ro***

The Loutrel: *Garden Sophisticate*

Refined with a softer point of view. Think botanical prints, fluid tailoring, delicate gold jewelry and a touch of Charleston color.

Shop the Look: ***HART Jewelry***

Zero George: *Heritage Chic*

Romantic architecture balanced by quiet luxury. Think linen, vintage-inspired silhouettes, woven textures and understated jewelry.

Shop the Look: ***Madison Mathews***

Post House Inn: *Coastal Prep*

Relaxed, polished and subtly nostalgic. Think striped knits, tailored shorts, loafers and a classic trench.

Shop the Look: ***Gold Creations***

The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort: *Resort Elegance*

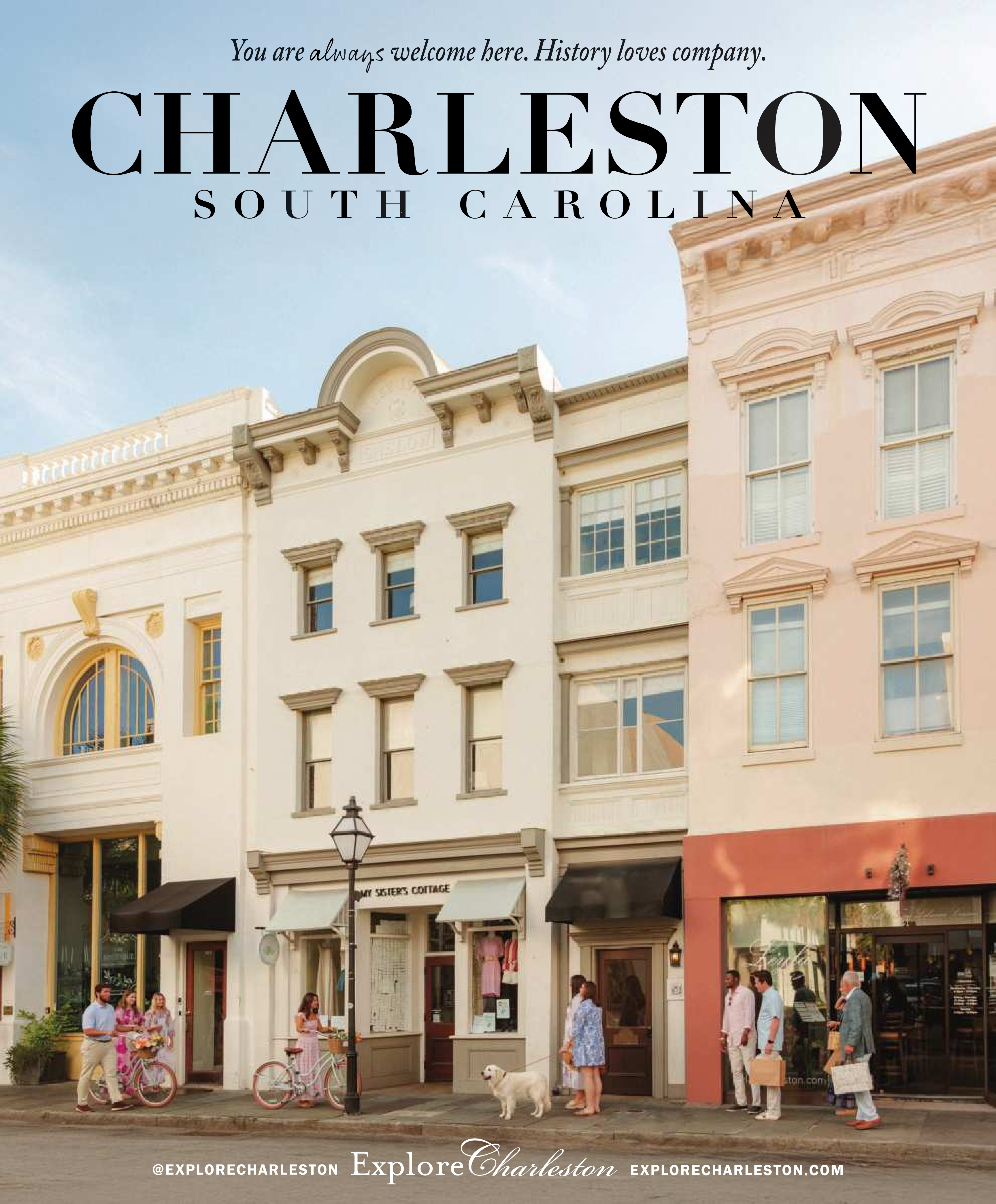
Graceful, composed and designed for a grand arrival. Think a flowing maxi dress, oversized sunglasses, woven accessories and evening-ready sandals.

Shop the Look: ***Charleston Shoe Company at Freshfields Village***

Wild Dunes Resort: *Coastal Sport*

Fresh, effortless and ready to move from beach to dinner. Think elevated separates, a lightweight knit, relaxed tailoring and a refined tote.

Shop the Look: ***Citrine Swim***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IT'S A WRAP

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A silk-scarf party dress from Area's fall 2026 collection; a scarf detail from a fall 2026 Chanel couture look; Isaac Mizrahi's polka-dot-scarf accent in 1990.

FIT TO BE TIED

How fashion made the fusty silk scarf cool again.

Not that long ago, the notion of a silk scarf conjured images of something slightly fusty—the lingering scent of mothballs in a grandmother's dresser, equal parts cherished and outdated. There were, of course, flashes of Grace Kelly's Riviera chic still woven into its legacy, but for many of us, our cultural association came courtesy of *The White Lotus,* where Jennifer Coolidge's scarf prompted comparisons to Peppa Pig, not Monica Vitti.

Then the runways intervened. At Celine, Michael Rider is intent upon the accessory's revival. His inaugural show, circa June 2025, took place under an enormous silk scarf "tent," and by now, four collections in, the American in Paris has shown twill scarves looped around necks, tucked into blazers, and cascading off shoulders.

Inspired by the silk T-shirts worn as turbans at Sarah Burton's fall 2026 Givenchy, I've been tying on a silk scarf kerchief-style on days when I have too much dry shampoo in my hair. I also enjoy sporting the occasional sarong or a wispily tacked-on top motivated by the tropical-office vibe that Julian Klausner has conjured at Dries Van Noten—Manhattan *is* an island, after all. And seeing everyone from Alexa Chung to Jennifer Lawrence in their folded foulards turned cummerbunds, it seems I'm not alone.

Is all this a simple yearning for bygone glamour—or is it something more? Area's Nicholas Aburn has an inkling. "I think there's a collectible quality to scarves, which is really desirable," he says as we mull over a waterfall wall of scarves at the Stella Dallas vintage store in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Also: "Scarves invite personalization." So much so that Aburn took inspiration from vintage examples to compose his own silk-scarf party dresses for Area's fall collection. Whether you tie it like a halter or a tube top, there's something exhilarating about being scantily clad in the finest tissue you can find.

Aburn himself is partial to what he calls a "Stefano Pilati," which conjures an image of the former Saint Laurent creative director's tucked-into-a-T-shirt scarf-wearing style. He grabs a greenish-brown paisley foulard and begins fiddling around to give it a perfect worn-in wrinkle before snapping, tucking, and tying for that exact Pilati twist. For me, he selects a geometric pastel creation in the vein of classic Hermès, where Nadège Vanhée has recently wound kerchiefs around gold chain-link necklaces.

"That really hits the spot," he says, surveying the results. "You can do so many different things. It can be this sartorial menswear vibe one day, and Palm Beach the next."—**ALEXANDRA HILDRETH**

AREA: GORUNWAY. CHANEL: SAM SUSSMAN. MODEL JOANNA RHODES: PHOTOGRAPHED BY TIZIANO MAGNI, *VOGUE*, FEBRUARY 1990.

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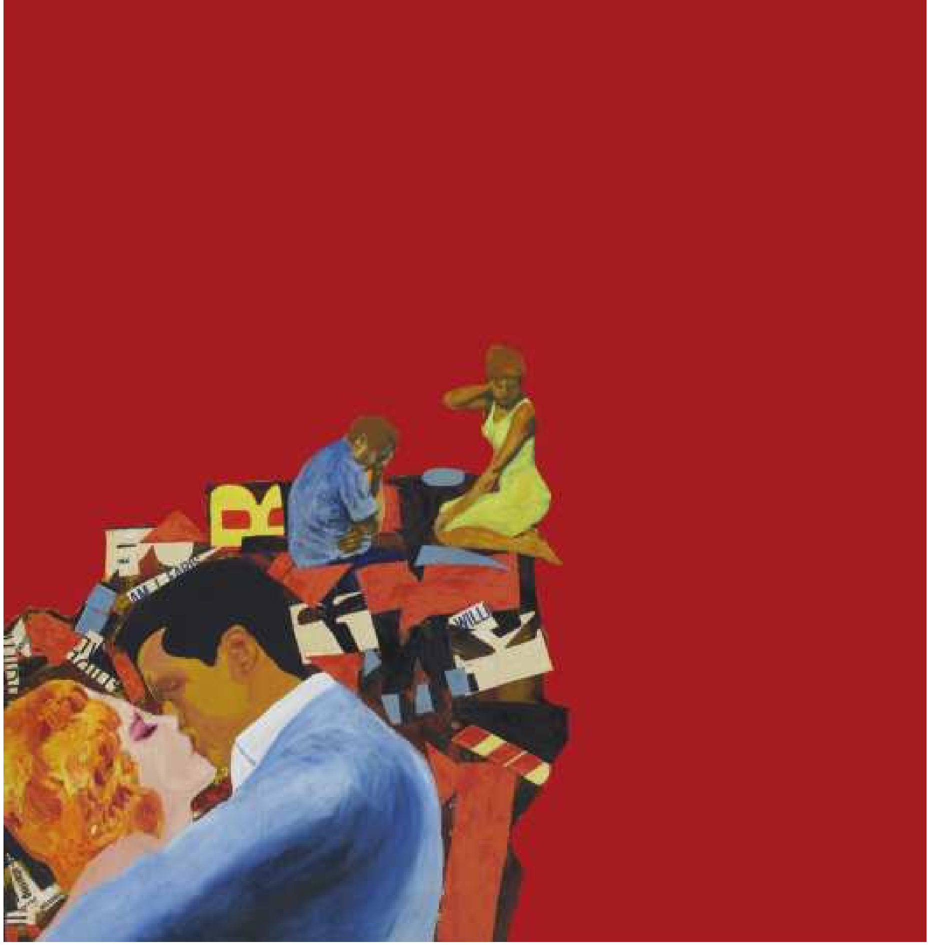
CHARACTER STUDY

A forgotten polymath of the Pop art movement gets an overdue tribute.

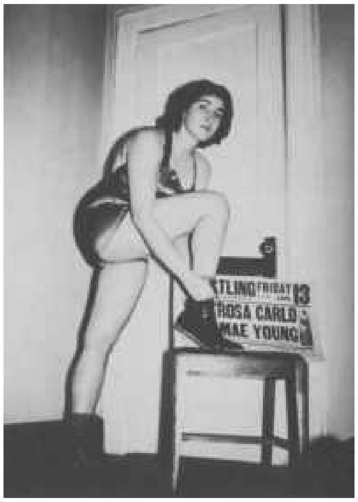
By Grace Edquist.



Rosalyn Drexler wrote her first novel on a dare. Up till then she was known mostly as an avant-garde sculptor and painter in New York. But after the editor Richard Grossman, then launching his own publishing house, read a few paragraphs she drafted on a lark in the early 1960s, he was impressed enough that he offered the amateur writer a book contract. "You do know that I've never written a novel," Drexler told him. "Well, you will," he countered.

She made good on his bet. Based on her 1940s adolescence in the Bronx, *I Am the Beautiful Stranger,* brought out by Grossman Publishers in 1965, was deemed a "subtly liberating," "wholly original," and "enormously replenishing" novel by *The New York Times Book Review.* The Beat poet Gregory Corso wrote to Drexler after reading it, thanking her for writing such an "honest and compelling" book.

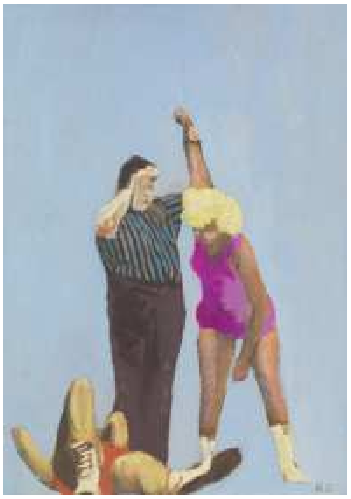
Drexler, who died last year at the age of 98, had a life full of such improbable triumphs. She was the kind of creative polymath who excelled at most things she attempted. A self-taught painter, she brought an incisive feminist perspective to the burgeoning genre of Pop art. She won an Obie Award for the first theater piece she ever wrote, 1964's *Home Movies* (which Susan Sontag called "fast and witty"); she was on the Emmy-winning writing team, along with Lorne Michaels and Richard Pryor, for Lily Tomlin's 1973 television special; and she received a Guggenheim fellowship (for fiction) and one from MacDowell (for painting). She even had a stint as a professional wrestler—its own kind of performance art.



"At that time, in the '60s and '70s, you were supposed to pick a lane," says Garth Greenan, whose New York City gallery has represented Drexler since 2015 and who will stage a greatest-hits show in September. The exhibition will include Drexler's writing and art but also personal correspondence and home movies she made with her husband, the late painter Sherman Drexler. "I want to put every ounce of steam that I can behind Rosalyn," Greenan says.

Rosalyn Bronznick was born in the Bronx in 1926, the oldest of three daughters raised by parents of Russian Jewish descent. She was a precocious kid and attended the High School of Music & Art (now LaGuardia). She met Sherman in Van Cortlandt Park—at the time she was studying with a dance group—and married him at 19, dropping out of Hunter College after one semester. At 20 she had her first child: a daughter, Rachel. Her son, Daniel, was born 11 years later.

Drexler's brief foray into professional wrestling was partly to escape the constraints of domestic life. "I've got to get away from this family thing for a while," she told the critic John Yau in 2007. She joined an all-women troupe and chose the wrestling nickname Rosa Carlo, the Mexican Spitfire (a stretch for a Jewish girl from the Bronx). For a few months she toured with the group across the South, leaving Sherman and a young Rachel at home. She didn't love life on the road, but it made for good material for her rollicking third novel, *To Smithereens,* published in 1972. (She was later the subject, as wrestler Rosa Carlo, of a Warhol silkscreen print.)



Back in New York, she hung out at the Cedar Bar, the famed Greenwich Village dive, with friends like Willem and Elaine de Kooning

>268

MANY COLORS

Rosalyn Drexler's work spanned painting, pro wrestling, and novel-writing. FROM TOP: *Lovers,* 1963, acrylic and paper collage on canvas; Drexler as Rosa Carlo, the Mexican Spitfire, circa 1950; *Lost Match,* 1962, acrylic and paper collage on canvas board.

DREXLER: PHOTOGRAPH BY SHERMAN DREXLER. ALL IMAGES: COURTESY OF GARTH GREENAN GALLERY, NEW YORK. © 2026 ROSALYN DREXLER/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK. *LOST MATCH:* COLLECTION OF ROSE ART MUSEUM AT BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY.

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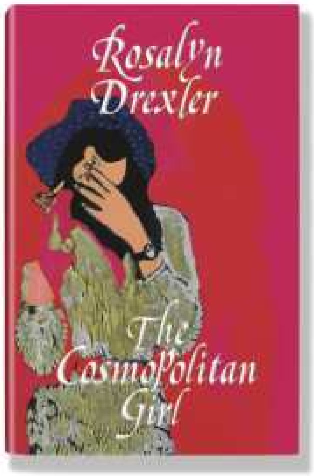
and began showing found object sculptures. Her solo show in 1960 at the experimental Reuben Gallery in the East Village marked her official entry onto the city's art scene. But when the gallery closed in 1961, she couldn't find a new one to represent her, so she pivoted to painting, hoping that might give her a better chance.

She became a Pop art pioneer, gluing enlarged ads she found in magazines and newspapers onto canvas before painting over them in vivid tones. "It was naive, but it worked," Drexler reflected in a 2017 essay. She placed her subjects at odd, sometimes extreme, angles, and she was particularly drawn to images that captured the gendered power dynamics in romantic relationships. Her two requirements for anything she made were that it had to be honest and it had to amuse her. Beyond that, she wasn't all that interested in what others thought.

"I think Drexler is almost alone among artists of her generation in pointing to physical violence against women as a casual part of the media landscape," says Katy Siegel, the co-curator of a retrospective that opened at the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University in 2016. Drexler never publicly disclosed whether her interest in the topic was born out of her own experience. Her point was that aggression was all around us, deeply embedded in American culture.



LADY IN RED

Drexler's *Chain Smoker* (1960) on the cover of the new edition of her 1974 novel.

By the mid-1960s, she turned her focus to writing. In addition to her award-winning plays and novels, she wrote occasional film reviews, including for this magazine. "She was so out of the box in her perceptions," says the poet and musician Joy Harjo, who became close friends with Drexler at the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1976, when Drexler was on the faculty and Harjo was pursuing her MFA. Both women felt like outsiders at the prestigious institution, and Harjo was drawn to Drexler's irreverence. "She was my place of sanity when I was trying to find my way."

The limelight started to fade in the 1980s. Drexler's art wasn't shown as much. But in the last decade or so before her death, new champions (including the writer Jonathan Lethem) pulled her back into the zeitgeist. Rachel Comey, who dove into Drexler's archive for inspiration for her spring 2027 collection, has newly joined the list of admirers, as has Hagfish, an indie publishing house run by 30-somethings Naomi Huffman and Julia Ringo that reissues out-of-print books. "We were looking for something loud and fresh, something unusual, something to really help us establish the voice of the project," says Huffman. They published *To Smithereens* as their first title last spring, and this fall they'll reissue Drexler's 1974 madcap satire *The Cosmopolitan Girl,* about a woman in a relationship with her talking dog.

If there was a downside to all of Drexler's multi-hyphenating, it's that she was never fully at home in one discipline. "She kind of did it all, but she did say to me that she was always there, but she was never *there,*" says Adam Harrison Levy, a writer and filmmaker at work on a documentary about Drexler. Maybe that's her true transgression: She refused to commit to just one thing. "She wanted to write her own story," Greenan says, "which speaks to all the different roles that she played in the theater that was her life." □

BALTIC-BOUND

Thatched-roof structures on Eha's property, located on the island of Hiiumaa.

ISLAND TIME

An imaginative resort opens in an unspoiled Estonian landscape.

You've heard of spring, summer, fall, and winter. But what about *viies aastaaeg*? Across southern Estonia in late March, as the ice thaws and the Baltic mists shift, a micro-season is created—one that Eha, a new retreat on the island of Hiiumaa, has termed "springrise." The island "has its own rhythm," says the Tallinn-born Eva Maran, who has spent the past five years developing Eha alongside her partner, Sonny Aswani. "Nothing can be forced."

Hiiumaa, which is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, has miles of white-sand beaches and moss-carpeted forests, dotted with traditional timber farmhouses and medieval stone churches. It's long served as a popular summer getaway for Estonians (think a wilder Martha's Vineyard), who have recently prospered thanks to Tallinn's tech boom. When I visited this summer, families could be spotted hopping onto sailboats or gathering outside the beachside restaurants for smoked fish and cold beers.

After a morning spent planting chaga mushrooms in the woods and a spot of seal-watching off the island's northern shores, I arrived at Eha: An octagonal, thatched-roof architectural wonder, it roosts above a tidal stream on the edge of an ancient pine forest, where blue-black barn swallows (the Estonian national bird) chirp among the reeds. "In Estonia, nature is a religion, and the forest is our church," notes Maran. In September guests will arrive here for multi-night wellness programs, with a focus on resetting circadian patterns and traditional activities like birch sauna, foraging, and even apitherapy. "So much of modern life pulls us away from our own rhythm," Maran adds. "At Eha, I hope people feel that rhythm slowly returning."—**LIAM HESS**

THE COSMOPOLITAN GIRL COVER: CLAIRE HUNGERFORD/ COURTESY OF HAGFISH. EHA: COURTESY OF EHA RETREAT.

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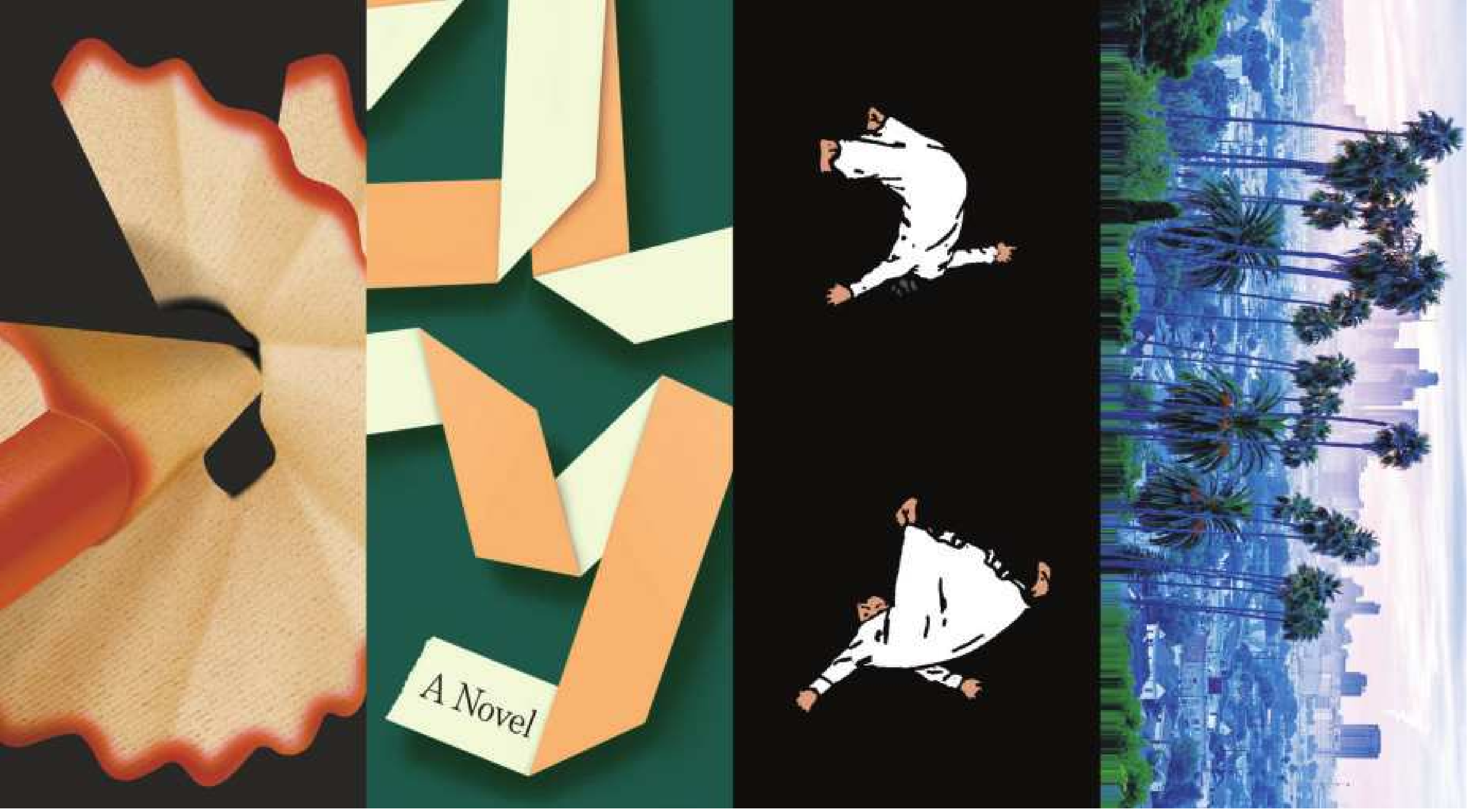

FUTURE PROMISE

Thrilling new fiction looks at what's to come.

Arriving almost a decade after she published the best-selling *Pachinko,* Min Jin Lee's **American Hagwon (Cardinal)** is nominally about the Korean obsession with education. A hagwon is a for-profit school (sometimes a "cram school") attended by students after school or on weekends, and in Lee's new novel it's a California outpost that is the repository of her characters' hope, determination, and occasional despair. The Koh family has ended up in Southern California after a series of misfortunes causes them to fall from a comfortable upper-middle-class life to a hardscrabble American existence. Lee builds a world for this family that is as dense and intricate as that of a 19th-century novel, and with similar themes—class, ambition, and autonomy—woven throughout. There is a warm and enveloping charm to Lee's writing; no matter how current the specifics of the predicament, some struggles are timeless.—CHLOE SCHAMA

Across his first two novels—*In the Distance* (2017) and the Pulitzer Prize–winning *Trust* (2022)—Hernan Diaz examined two pillars of American history: the Wild West and Wall Street. In **Ply (Riverhead)**, he turns his gaze to the future. Set a few hundred years from now, the novel takes place in a dystopian East Coast metropolis (guess which…) bisected along class lines, overrun by nature, and in which electricity has become a black market currency. The protagonist is a "pincher," illegally tapping into the grid to fuel an underground punk music and arts scene. As she's drawn to a mysterious, radical physicist—who is covertly experimenting with a device that promises to unknit the fabric of space-time itself—questions around identity, capitalism, and chosen family arise. While it retains the epic sweep of Diaz's previous novels, *Ply* also marks a departure with the density of its inventive vernacular. But for those willing to go along for the ride, it's a page-turning, pleasurably disorienting, and deeply humane vision of a possible future.—LIAM HESS

Emma Cline captured a kind of youthful anomie in her second novel, *The Guest*—a book about a grifterish woman hiding out in the Hamptons. The flickering end of adulthood, not the messy, sexy start of it, is the subject of her new novel, **Switzy (Random House)**, a story situated in another rarefied realm: the cosseted existence of a financial titan. David Hastings is his name, and, with his aged brain failing, he's on a farewell swing from London to Zurich, where assisted suicide awaits. Cline's simple, detailed prose has tensile strength, and she vividly captures her protagonist's regrets and ambivalences and the pathos of a mind slipping away.—TAYLOR ANTRIM

Emily St. John Mandel became a literary superstar after *Station Eleven,* a post-pandemic-set work of science fiction that for a particular time seemed an eerie evocation of a fate that might await us all. In her new novel, **Exit Party (Knopf)**, the sci-fi is more metaphysical, involving parallel universes that chart alternative trajectories for society: one in which militias and territories have carved out martial authority; another in which a centralized surveillance-state power has consolidated control. Variations on the same characters occupy each domain—a masterful sketch of what is internal to a person and how their environment shapes them. Mandel crafts her cast of personalities with remarkable economy; despite the fluidity of the narrative, these individuals feel layered and complex. Very few writers world-build with such compact skill, the suspense enmeshed in every line.—C.S.

PAGE BY PAGE
FROM LEFT: Cover details from *American Hagwon, Ply, Switzy,* and *Exit Party.*

AMERICAN HAGWON: COURTESY OF CARDINAL. *PLY:* COURTESY OF RIVERHEAD BOOKS. *SWITZY:* COURTESY OF RANDOM HOUSE. *EXIT PARTY:* COURTESY OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE.

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Just Kids

Kaia Gerber and Homer Gere have the good fortune of famous parents and flourishing careers—including starring roles in summer's alluring Bret Easton Ellis adaptation, *The Shards.* But they both know that making their own way means being utterly, unapologetically themselves. By Rob Haskell. Photographed by Steven Meisel.

In his best-selling 2024 book, *The Anxious Generation,* the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt argued that today's adolescents, flowering in a hothouse paned in iPhone glass, lack the exposure to chance and accident—not to mention to one another—that tends to produce daring, adaptable, and independent adults. Haidt, who is the same age as the writer Bret Easton Ellis, waxes nostalgic for many of the freedoms enjoyed in Ellis's 2023 novel, *The Shards.* But probably not all of them. While Haidt bemoans the current generation's lack of what he calls "free play," meandering and unsupervised, Ellis's young protagonists play with an abandon that verges on recklessness. The kids in *The Shards* might benefit from an occasional watchful eye, if only their parents weren't vacationing in Europe indefinitely.

This month Ryan Murphy brings his adaptation of *The Shards* to FX, and for those still floating on the '90s reverie of *Love Story,* his chronicle of the courtship, marriage, and tragic end of John F. Kennedy Jr. and Carolyn Bessette, here is another occasion for sensory time travel, to a world even more pleasingly analog, with even tighter jeans. Ellis's setting is Los Angeles in 1981, when the lives of a group of seniors at an elite private school are disrupted by a new student with a shadowy past. These kids are fast, weaving through the canyon in luxury cars, snorting cocaine, throwing sumptuous parties at their parents' houses, peacocking, fornicating, clubbing, and country-clubbing. All the while, a serial killer known as the Trawler is targeting young women from the city's wealthy neighborhoods.

The show's ensemble is anchored by Igby Rigney, who plays Bret (Ellis's younger self, more or less), an aspiring writer, closeted, whose girlfriend, Debbie Schaffer, is the daughter of a major Hollywood producer. But it's Kaia Gerber as Susan Reynolds, Bret's best friend, and Homer Gere as Robert Mallory, the mysterious new arrival, who give the show's credit sequence its frisson. Gerber's mother is, of course, Cindy Crawford, and Gere's father is Richard Gere; together they were among the iconic couples of the early '90s. (Indeed, they were photographed by Herb Ritts for the November 1992 cover of this magazine.)

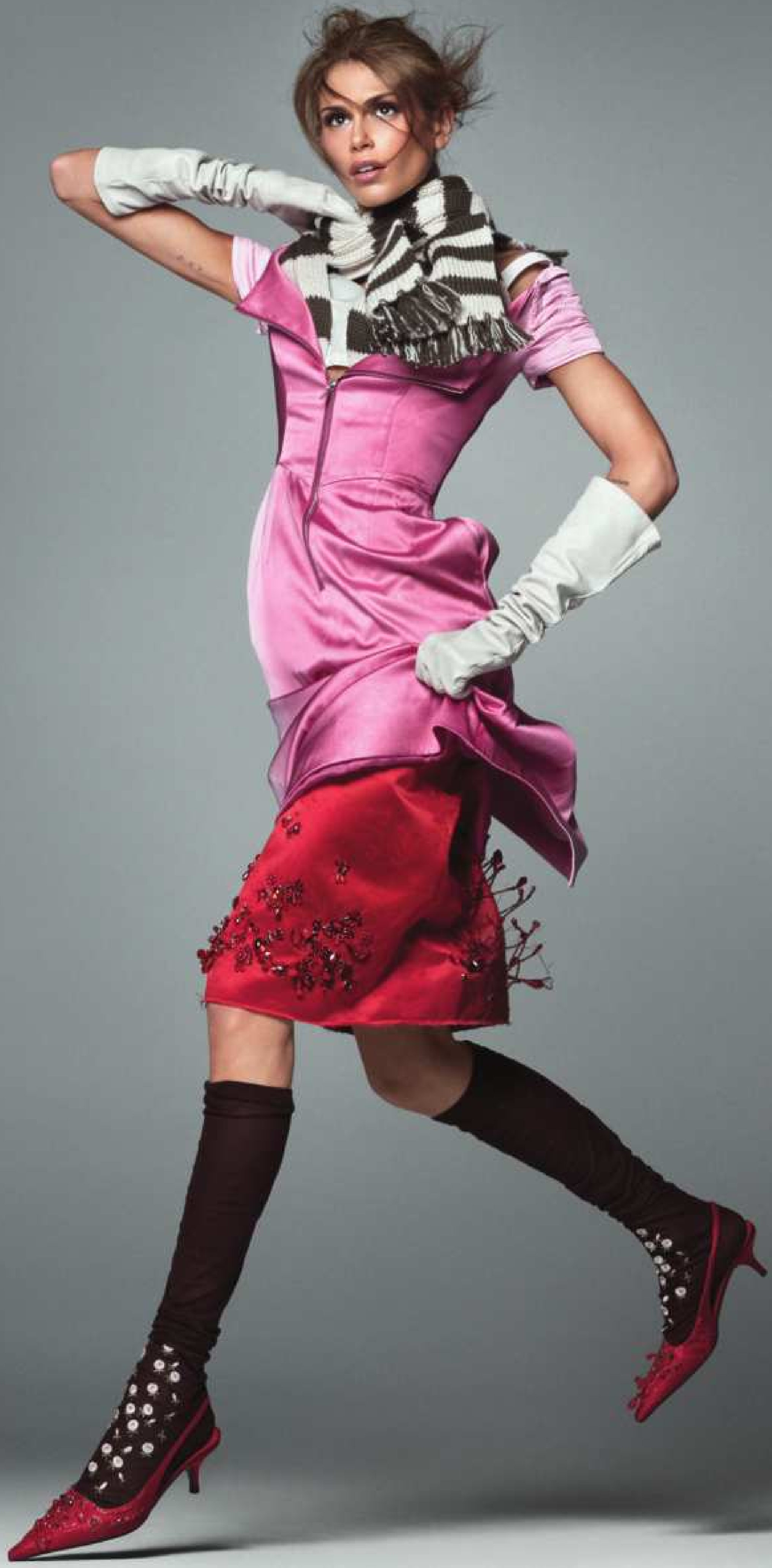
DOUBLE TAKE

Gerber and Gere in Dior. They play two of the rich, disaffected 1980s LA teenagers in Ryan Murphy's new series *The Shards.* Fashion Editor: Spencer Singer.

DiOr

LAYER CAKE
Gerber in Prada. OPPOSITE: Bottega Veneta dress and hat.

BEAUTY NOTE
The long game. Nars Notorious Mascara coats and conditions lashes with a new formula featuring nourishing argan oil.



“You watch *The Shards,* and it makes you long for a time when you could get into a little bit of trouble without it being on the internet the next day,” Gerber says

“Maybe it seems too on the nose,” Homer Gere says of this next-gen casting coup. He remembers meeting Gerber for the first time, along with a few other *Shards* cast members, at Ye Rustic Inn in Los Feliz. “That’s Kaia’s spot. It’s, like, her chill I’m-gonna-go-have-a-beer-and-smoke-a-cig-outside spot. Twenty minutes into knowing each other, I was like, ‘Should we just acknowledge the fact that our parents were married?’ She was like, ‘Yeah. Cool.’ And that was it.”

Gere has brought me to the Noguchi Museum, an ivy-clad fortress occupying a quiet triangular block of Long Island City, Queens. It’s an important place for him, not merely because it houses an arresting collection of the Japanese American artist’s abstract carved-stone and basalt sculptures. Gere, who was a visual arts major at Brown, came to know the museum when he produced a painstaking replica of one of Isamu Noguchi’s paper lamps for an architecture class. It’s an unusually hot late-spring afternoon, and he is wearing blue USA rugby shorts that he thrifted last week in Rome, a T-shirt he stole from his dad’s closet that was a long-ago gift from Bruce Weber, and a beat-to-hell New York Yankees cap. This is his first interview, he tells me. He admits that he is nervous and adds that someone advised him to avoid sarcasm because it doesn’t translate well in print.

“I just want to appear likable,” he says ingenuously. “I talked to my dad about this, and he said, ‘You’re playing a character even when you’re yourself in some way.’ You know? I understand the game a little more, I think, than a person who has done as little work as I have should. I grew up in the most normal possible situation given who my father was. I didn’t grow up in the industry at all. I had never been on a professional set until last summer.”

Gere and Gerber could not have come to *The Shards* with more different CVs. Gerber began modeling at 10 and was 16 when she walked a major runway. She has had roles in two previous Ryan Murphy productions, among other television and film work, and Murphy had her in mind for the role of Susan, the beautiful and brainy student body president, as soon as *The Shards* was greenlit. Gere’s arrival at acting was desultory, though maybe inevitable. He grew up in Pound Ridge, New York, with Richard Gere and his mother, the actress Carey Lowell. Though his parents divorced when he was 13, he remembers his childhood as “idyllic.” Richard, who was 50 when Homer was born, made a point of building a family away from Hollywood. Upstate, Homer was raised essentially as an only child, though he is in fact one of seven siblings in a complex blended family: He has stepbrothers aged 36 and 40; a half sister aged 36; a stepbrother aged 13; and two half brothers, six and seven. On his mother’s side, he is the youngest; on his father’s side, the oldest.

“I was not a theater kid at all,” he recalls. “Not. At. All. I was a jock. I mean, I think I was a sensitive jock! But I had grown up my entire childhood with people asking, ‘Are you gonna be an actor when you’re older?’ And I was like, ‘Fuck no.’ I was good in school, and I had no pressure from my parents. Acting was always over there”—he flicks his hand to the side—“it was some other thing that other people did. There are a million happy lives that you can live, you know? And it’s a complicated life. I think I knew that firsthand.”

In college, Gere marched from major to major before discovering that he liked to make art. During the pandemic, he took a gap year, driving across the country and falling madly in love with the outdoors. Sport climbing is Gere’s passion. He relishes the challenge of working through difficult predicaments in nature in highly controlled ways. Climbing runs in the bloodline: His maternal grandfather, the geologist James Lowell, has scaled every 14,000-foot mountain in Colorado, and, at 26, Gere has made it up 11 out of 52.

Back on campus in the fall of 2022, when he was a junior, a friend asked him to act in a short student film. “All of a sudden I was involved in the film community on campus,” he remembers. “And every semester from then on, that was my main focus. I was trying to make sketches with my friends or, you know, how many sets can I be a part of? Can I do production design for you guys? Can I do location scouting? I just wanted to be on a team.” Gere graduated in 2024 despite a concussion sustained playing club soccer that caused him to miss his final exams. After some time at home with his mother in Katonah, New York, and not seeing a clear path forward for himself, he spent a few months in Colorado, camping, hiking, and climbing. That’s when he got an out of the blue call from a talent manager who had seen one of his student films and wanted to know if he was interested in representation. “I was like, Okay, maybe this is a sign.”

To this point, Gere’s exposure to Los Angeles had taken the form of Ed Limato, his father’s legendary agent, pulling up to his childhood home in Pound Ridge. The door of Limato’s limousine would open, and a cloud of cigarette smoke, like a breath of Old Hollywood, would herald his emergence. Homer and his father have not talked much about acting. Instead they tend to discuss the politics of the set and the perils of celebrity. “I’m an introvert who has developed enough social skills to function,” he says. “I think my dad is the same.”

Gere’s parents both have enduring affiliations with Tibetan Buddhism, and its teachings have left an immovable mark. “Having a father who practices meditation—and in particular compassion

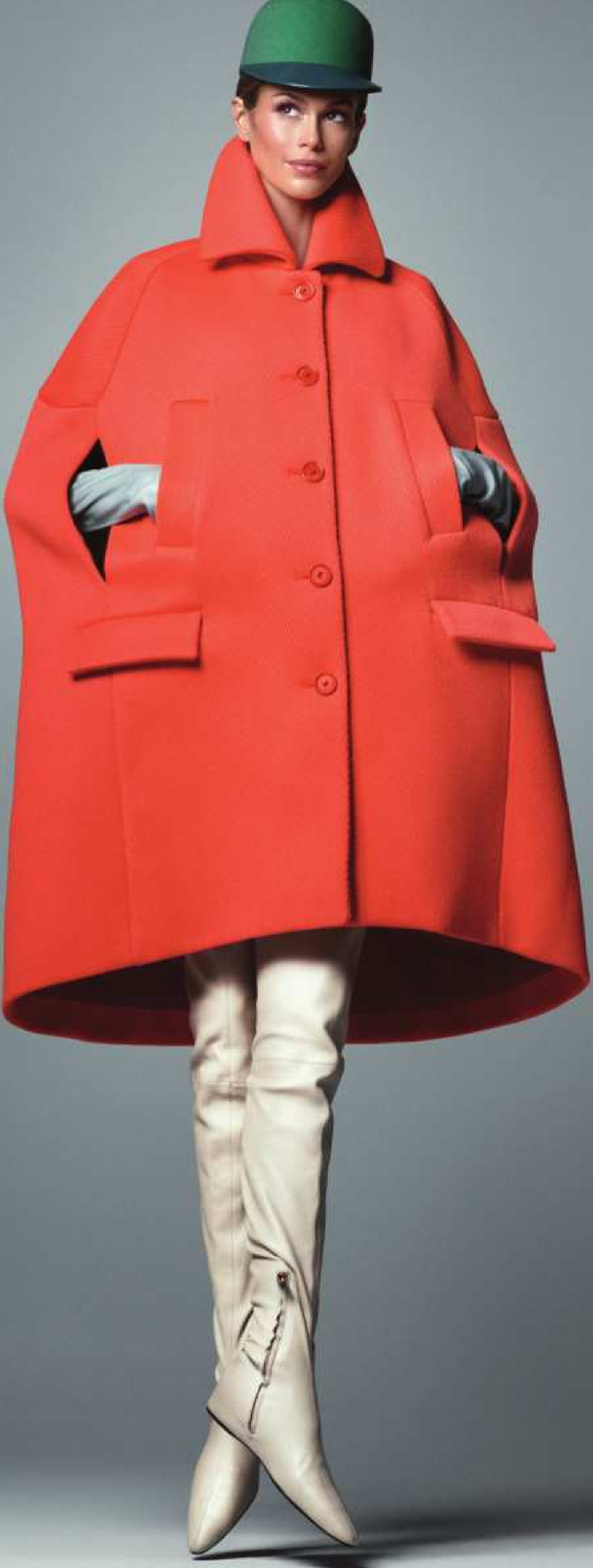
SWING TIME

The Shards is Gerber’s third project with Murphy, who immediately had her in mind for a role. Gerber wears Chanel.

STEP UP
Valentino dress, Gigi Burris Millinery hat, and Herbert Levine shoes. Cartier earrings. OPPOSITE: Dolce & Gabbana suit.

THE PARENT TRAP

When Gerber and Gere first met as castmates, "I was like, 'Should we just acknowledge the fact that our parents were married?' " Gere says. "She was like, 'Yeah. Cool.' And that was it." Both wear Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello.



ORANGE AND THE NEW BLACK
Balenciaga coat. Noel Stewart hat. Herbert Levine boots. OPPOSITE: Louis Vuitton dress, hat, and necklace.

> “I think doubting yourself a bit is healthy, no matter how good you are. You should always be a little nervous if you’re doing something worthwhile,” Gere says

meditation—an hour a day for the last 50 years definitely affects you,” he says. “It gives you a window into the real work that you can do on yourself. I didn’t know my dad when he was in his 20s, but I think he was kind of a brat.” He laughs. “He’s grown a lot. That’s the whole game, isn’t it? You’re never a finished product. For me the biggest lesson of Buddhism is the basic attitude of non-harming. It’s like, you want to wish everyone the best of whatever that version is for them. No matter what the vibe is. Whether it’s someone you like, someone you don’t like, it just makes life a lot easier to move through.”

He auditioned for two series in the spring of 2025, *Euphoria* and *The Shards,* and he and his father were in India for the Dalai Lama’s birthday celebration when he got a call from Murphy’s team asking him to come for a screen test. He flew to Los Angeles, landed the part of Robert Mallory, and two weeks later also got the role of Dylan Reid, a TV star who ends up the target of Cassie’s sexual opportunism, in *Euphoria.* “In September I drove cross-country, moved into the Villa Carlotta, and suddenly I’m doing a bedroom scene with Sydney Sweeney,” Gere recalls. “It was fucking crazy.”

Gerber was surprised to find herself the most seasoned of the *Shards* ensemble. Hayes Warner, who plays Debbie, is a singer with no previous TV or film credits. Graham Campbell, who plays Susan’s boyfriend, Thom Wright, is also on TV for the first time. “Fame was something that I was born into, so I didn’t experience what it was like to *become* famous,” Gerber explains. “I kind of thought that my way of being raised was the most anonymous it could get under the circumstances, and then I met Homer. Like, there are no photos of him as a child online, whereas my entire childhood and teenage years are on the internet. I can only imagine. I’m 24 but…very interviewed.”

We are sitting at the Chateau Marmont, a sentimental place for Gerber since it housed the writers room for *The Shards* and was the setting for cast dinners presided over by Murphy, almost in loco parentis. Gerber tells a different story about her first meeting with Gere and their other castmates at her favorite dive bar last summer. Gere walked in late (Gerber, like her mother, is famously punctual) wearing a hat and a grin, and she thought, Wow, he’s *so* like his character. “I think Homer has Robert’s charisma without his cruelty,” she says. “I looked around, and I said to the group, ‘You guys are all so much like your characters. That’s so interesting, since I’m nothing like mine.’ Which was so dumb. They all looked at me, and they go, ‘Hmm. No, I don’t think you’re the exception.’ Susan is a lot more like me than I want to admit.”

Gerber’s current life in Los Angeles exists mostly outside the orbit of her Malibu childhood. “Unfortunately all the things that people assume are true,” she says. “I was in the ocean every day. My brother would go surfing and then walk up to school in his wetsuit with his surfboard, barefoot. You’re with the same kids from preschool to when you graduate. There were no Ubers there, so your parents were driving you to parties and then picking you up. There was only so much trouble you could get into.”

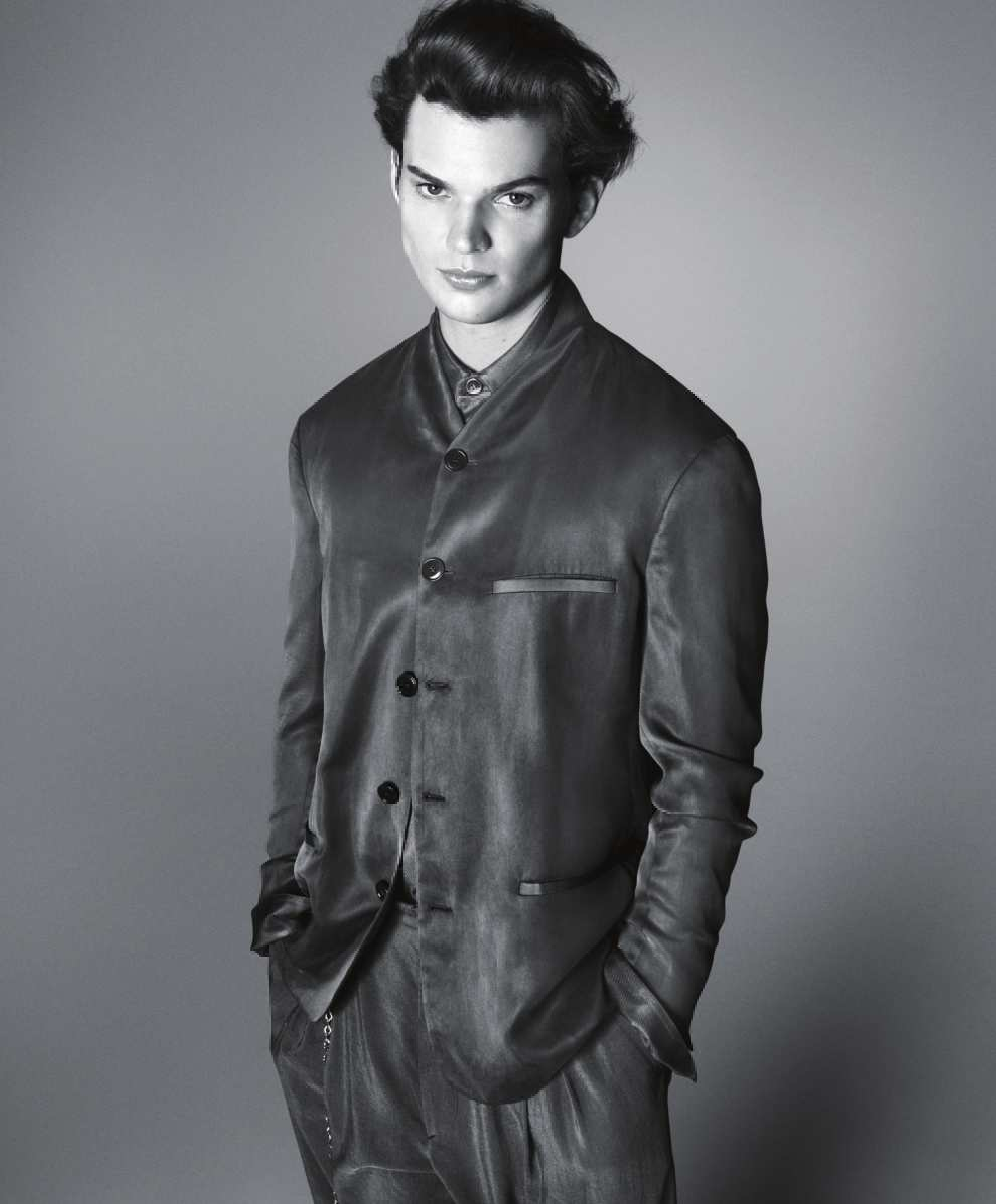
In other words, though she was first photographed by Steven Meisel as a 13-year-old, Gerber does not recognize much of her own adolescence in Susan and her precocious clique. But she certainly remembers feeling like a brave little adult at 17, in New York with her own apartment, too proud to call her mother when she couldn’t figure out how to turn on the dishwasher. In fact, her parents’ visibility may have acted as a safeguard against wildness. “I never wanted to embarrass them,” she recalls. “I never wanted to be that child coming in and ruining all the hard work they’ve done. I wasn’t a partier in high school. My mom was valedictorian, so I was like, Okay, well then me too. I was the student that was like, ‘You forgot to assign homework!’ That didn’t make me very popular. Really I was thinking, This is temporary. I don’t want to do anything that will potentially mess up my life and career. I always had big dreams. But you watch *The Shards,* and it makes you long for a time when you weren’t on your phone and where you could get into a little bit of trouble without it being on the internet the next day.”

Modeling was the path laid out for her, but Gerber always wanted to be an actor, and she has applied herself with characteristic gusto. She has studied Meisner and Strasberg. Last spring, while her peers were at Paris Fashion Week, she was playing an emotionally brittle young woman in Will Arbery’s *Evanston Salt Costs Climbing* at the 99-seat Matrix Theatre in West Hollywood. “My character is struggling with suicidal thoughts every night, and then I’d walk out and people are holding pictures of me posing naked as a teenager, asking me to sign them,” she remembers. “It’s like, I want to bleed out for people, and then I’m sort of hit in the face with this other thing.”

Her older brother Presley Gerber’s decade-long struggle with drug addiction appears to have provided a sort of foil as Kaia was discovering who she was. “When something like that happens in a family, it kind of levels everyone,” she explains. “I think that’s also why I started to self-identify as the easy one and never wanted to ask for help. Because it felt like too much to have two children who were needing.” Last December, Presley opened up about his struggles in an Instagram video. Kaia, who has pursued multiple therapeutic modalities and is a champion of psychedelic therapy, in particular,

SUITS HIM

“I can’t watch myself,” says Gere, still new to acting. “It’s a whole thing.” Gere wears Giorgio Armani.



WHITE HOT

Gerber in Givenchy by Sarah Burton. Church's shoes. OPPOSITE: Loewe top and dress. Manolo Blahnik shoes. Chanel Fine Jewelry earrings and rings.

Gerber wishes she could be synonymous with her work, a trick some screen stars, such as her idol Gena Rowlands, managed. “To me that’s the ultimate flex”

is deeply proud of him. “My parents for most of our lives were very, very private and didn’t share anything—and now we have this absolute teacher, my brother, who says, ‘I’m gonna be very human for everyone.’ There’s only so much you can hide from the world. And trying to put a lid on something just makes the person feel like you’re ashamed of them.”

Gerber, who quickly exhausted Malibu High School’s independent study track—available mainly to people on the surf team but also to the occasional supermodel—passed her high school equivalency exam at age 16. And so she loved having a chance to play homecoming queen and class president in *The Shards.* (Gerber confesses that she ran for president herself in the fifth grade and lost.) She remembers how excited she was when Murphy told her to ad-lib a speech for a school assembly. “I know it was, like, 200 background actors who were paid to cheer for me, but it didn’t matter,” she says. “I was thinking, I have been waiting for this moment my whole life.”

A few days after Gerber and I sit down, the Supreme Court throws out a lower court order calling for a new trial for the man convicted of the 1979 murder of Etan Patz. For children and parents of the 1980s, Patz’s disappearance—a six-year-old leaves his SoHo apartment and is never seen again—signaled a newly dangerous universe.

Ryan Murphy had Patz in mind when he read *The Shards,* whose tense ambiance is rooted in the real-life paranoia of Southern California at the dawn of the ’80s, a golden age of serial murder. The Night Stalker, the Hillside Stranglers, the Toolbox Killers, the Freeway Killer, and the Golden State Killer held the region in their grips, and yet in a certain milieu, at least, teenagers had rarely enjoyed so much freedom. “I never saw my parents,” Murphy recalls of his own childhood in Indiana in the 1970s. “We ran around like wild children. Then everything changed. The year *The Shards* is set, 1981, was arguably the most important year of my life. I was a sophomore in high school. I was struggling with my sexuality. I lost my virginity, and, in July of 1981, in *The New York Times* there was the first announcement of AIDS. That was the year that I linked sexuality with the threat of death, as so many gay men did. I remember asking Bret, ‘Is the Trawler really AIDS? Is HIV the real monster here?’ He just smiled and said, ‘My work is open to interpretation.’ ”

If *Love Story* is a meditation on life pre-9/11, *The Shards* is its pre-AIDS corollary. The material struck a deep chord in Murphy, who shared with his young cast his own experience growing up in the wake of Studio 54’s decadence and on the cusp of AIDS. “That’s such an important aspect of the book,” he explains, “this idea that there was suddenly a price to be paid for the joy and freedom of a beautiful adolescence. The ultimate bogeyman of my childhood was AIDS, so I really tried to put that in the show. But I wasn’t really prepared for how emotional I got when I directed it. I was shocked by how many times I would read a line or hear a song and burst into tears. I was always feeling the trauma of my youth.”

It was a look backward for Murphy, but also a reflection on the ills of contemporary life, especially for the young. Murphy, a parent to three children, the oldest of whom is 13, tells me, “There’s something about *The Shards* that says: Maybe the world was better when it was pre-digital.” He made his cast leave their phones in their trailers for hours in the hope that they might build connections. By all accounts it was successful: Gere and Gerber say that the cast has remained uncommonly close. (The night before our trip to the museum, the two were dancing at Joyface in the East Village until 3 a.m.)

Though he met his girlfriend of the last year and a half on Hinge, Gere does not use social media. Gerber has found her way out of the dark corners of the internet that used to preoccupy her. “You’d read something nice about yourself,” she says, “and then scroll and find something that’s going to obliterate you. But it learns you very well. Now my TikTok is kind of a pleasant place: It’s cooking videos and fishing-gear reviews and old men singing folk songs.”

Murphy thinks that Gere will be a big star in spite of himself. “He has a quality that I like in an actor, which is a real sense of mystery. He has no interest in being famous. He’s interested in the work of acting, and I love that about him. Kaia is so knowing. She’s been around the block, and although she reads more than anyone I’ve ever met in my life, she is also so pop-culture savvy. Homer is nothing like that. I think he’ll stay pure.” To that end, after shooting Oliver Stone’s new film, *White Lies,* in June, Gere headed into a 10-day Vipassana, or silent meditation, retreat in central Massachusetts. He has no other projects in the pipeline, and his agent understood that he would really and truly not be checking his phone. Before he went out of pocket, though, he learned that still images from *Euphoria* in which he is wearing nothing but underwear had gone viral. The internet, it turned out, was busy praising the soft contours of his physique (some called it “natural,” others dubbed it a “dad bod”).

“The fact that I’m apparently a body-positivity icon has opened my eyes to the absurdity of the media,” he tells me later by text (though my sense is that his eyes were already wide open). Gerber, whose body has been sliced and diced by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 372

ON THE BUTTON
Gerber wears Marc Jacobs. Mikimoto necklace. In this story: hair, Guido Palau; makeup, Pat McGrath. Details, see In This Issue.

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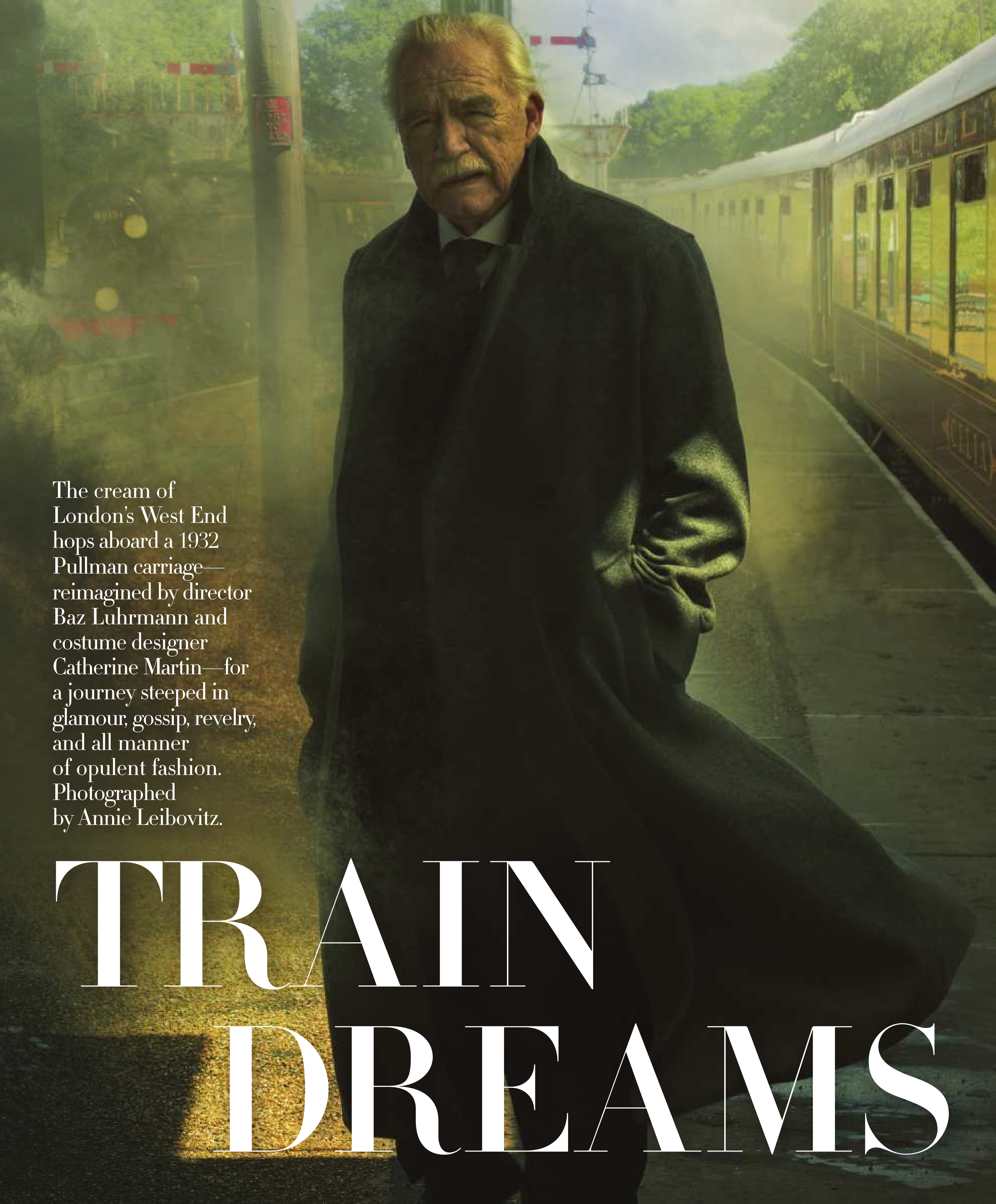


TRAIN DREAMS

The cream of London's West End hops aboard a 1932 Pullman carriage—reimagined by director Baz Luhrmann and costume designer Catherine Martin—for a journey steeped in glamour, gossip, revelry, and all manner of opulent fashion. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz.

TICKET TO RIDE

FROM LEFT: Brian Cox, in **Paul Smith,** will reprise his West End performance as J.S. Bach in *The Score* when it comes to Washington, DC, in September. "It feels more pertinent now," he says, "and even more ironic exploring corruption in Washington, given who is running the show." Letitia Wright wears a **Max Mara** dress. Josephine Thiesen wears **Akris.**

Fashion Editor: Tabitha Simmons.

RUNNING THE SHOW
Luke Thompson (in an **Emporio Armani** waistcoat, shirt, and trousers) returns to the London stage in Robert Icke's adaptation of *The Lives of Others* in October. Theater, he says, is "not a methodical job to me—it's instinctive. When people are asking you how you do it up there, it's like asking how you stay alive."

It's

"It's about power," says Harriet Walter, the 75-year-old theatrical legend, on the first hot day of an English summer, finger sandwich in hand, yellowing fields of West Sussex wilting away through the train windows behind her. "The regime change, the morality of war…," she plows on, in floor-length Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda, "…the brutal decisions that have to be made."

Actor Archie Madekwe leans in, enraptured by her take on Phyllida Lloyd's all-women *Julius Caesar,* which opens in Stratford (with Walter as Brutus) this November. Madekwe, 31, is already deep in his run of Simon Stone's *The Oresteia* at London's The Bridge.

When Madekwe lets slip to the actors aboard Belmond's deliciously Deco British Pullman—commandeered today by *Vogue* to celebrate the launch of a new Baz Luhrmann– and Catherine Martin–designed carriage—that he has secretly filmed a Madonna video with Kate Moss and Benedict Cumberbatch, they fall on him as though he were carrion. ("She runs, um, pretty late," chuckles Madekwe in response to the barrage of questions.)

The clutch of productions represented by the group in this story will define the theatrical calendar this autumn. There's Brian Cox (marvelously grumpy in *The Score,* coming to Washington, DC, in September), Letitia Wright (appearing in the newsroom play *The Story* at the National), Mason Alexander Park (angelic-voiced and scene-stealing in Broadway's *Much Ado About Nothing,* in previews from October), Sadie Soverall (a standout in the London production of *John Proctor Is the Villain,* which is getting another West End run early next year), and Josephine Thiesen (who recently played Alice in a staging of *Alice in Wonderland* in Hamburg, and will soon be seen in Tom Ford's next film *Cry to Heaven*).

The shoot is a fashion play: lovers, schemers, ingenues, villains, braggarts, all under the direction of photographer Annie Leibovitz. The actor Luke Thompson, dozing in a brocade chair (and soon to play opposite Keira Knightley in *The Lives of Others* at the Adelphi), takes the temperature best: "With film and TV you're not there when the audience is unwrapping their present. In theater—that charged feeling. It's electric."

He smiles, watching Park take a turn through the carriage in magenta Valentino couture. "You have to really believe in it."—GILES HATTERSLEY

STAGE WHISPERS

FROM LEFT: Sadie Soverall wears a **Miss Sohee** gown. Harriet Walter in **Valentino.** Wright, in an **Erdem** suit, is making her National Theatre debut playing an ambitious journalist in *The Story.* She likens theater to the gym: "You need strength, discipline," she says, "not only in the mind, but in body and spirit."

FLYING COLORS
Soverall, in **Givenchy by Sarah Burton,** is taking her recent starring role in *John Proctor Is the Villain* to its West End revival next year. While she "grew up looking at the tortured artists," she says, "I've learned how to look after myself a lot more."

ALL THAT GLITTERS
Mason Alexander Park, in **Valentino Haute Couture,** is making her Broadway debut in Jamie Lloyd's acclaimed production of *Much Ado About Nothing.* "I grew up not having a very clear-cut path as an artist, especially as a trans artist," she says. "I'm just trying to find more parts written for strange, singular people."

SHALL WE DANCE?

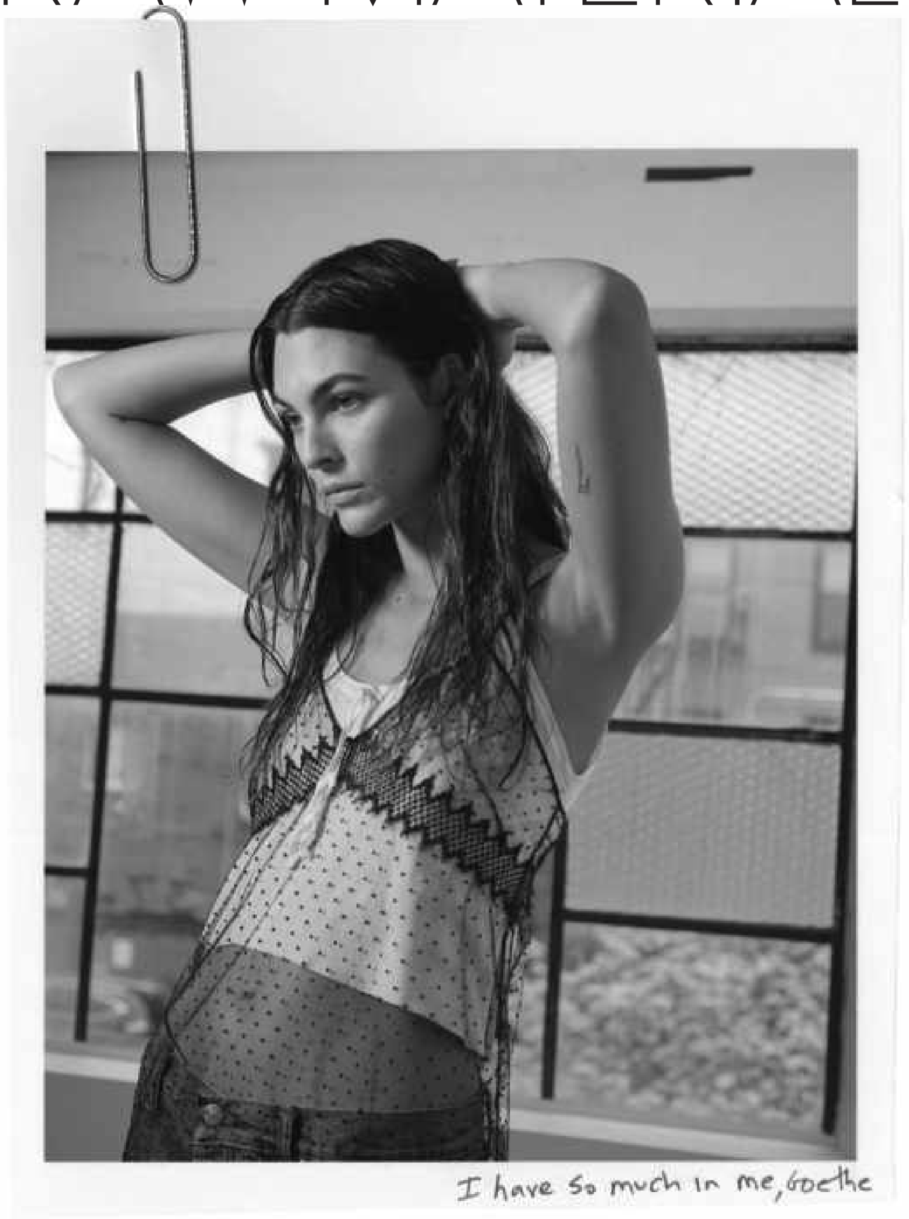
FROM LEFT: Thompson in a **Junya Watanabe Man** jacket. Cox in a **Moss** waistcoat and **Polo Ralph Lauren** trousers. Thiesen in **Chanel.** Wright in **Danielle Frankel.** Archie Madekwe in **Dior.** This year, Thiesen stars in Nobel laureate Elfriede Jelinek's *Prinzessinendramen*—a feminist retelling of fairy tales—and she'll be seen in Tom Ford's upcoming film *Cry to Heaven.* "I have made my own world," she says, "to have the freedom to explore things in our art that don't really exist yet."

THE END OF THE LINE

FROM LEFT: Cox wears a **Dunhill** suit. Madekwe, in a **Valentino** top, says that "nothing can prepare you for doing eight shows a week—you start feeling like an athlete." Walter, in **Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda,** proclaims that she "will always believe in theater as an instrument for change, entertainment, wonder, and excitement." In this story: makeup, Lisa Houghton. Details, see In This Issue.

PRODUCED BY FARAGO PROJECTS. PRODUCTION DESIGN: MARY HOWARD. SET DECORATION: LEE FLUDE. SPECIAL THANKS TO BRITISH PULLMAN, A BELMOND TRAIN, ENGLAND.

RAW MATERIAL



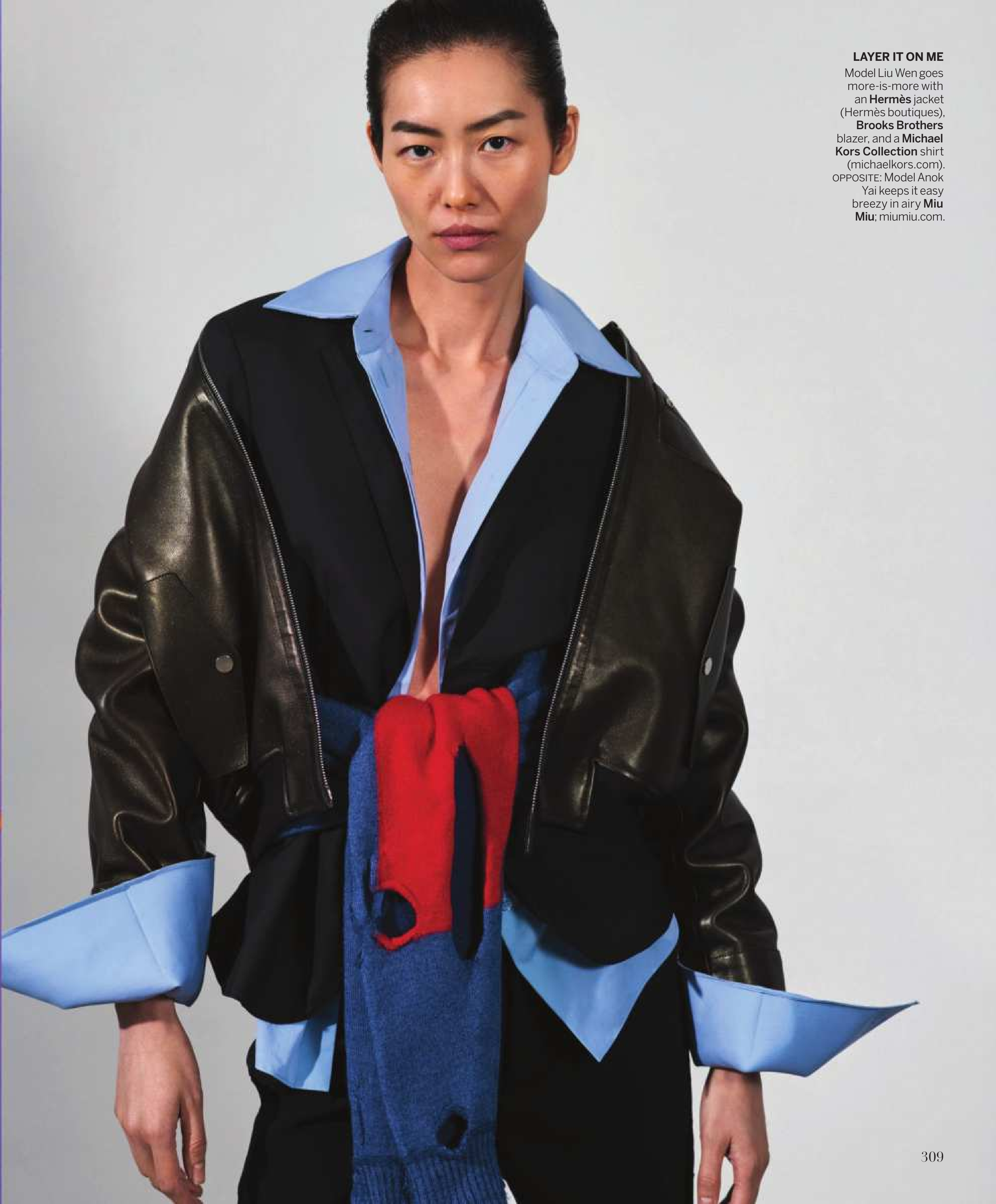
I have so much in me, Goethe

GRUNGE IS ALIVE AND WELL IN 2026—BUT INSTEAD OF OVERSIZED FLANNELS AND DITSY FLORALS, ITS NEW ERA IS DEFINED BY GAUZY LAYERS, DISTRESSED DENIM, AND A MINIMAL, UNDONE SENSE OF EASE. PHOTOGRAPHED BY COLLIER SCHORR.

HIGH CONTRAST

It's all about balance—just ask Gigi Hadid, who wears a sumptuous, buttery silk **Givenchy by Sarah Burton** top (givenchy.com) with rough-and-tumble distressed **Levi's** from Mothfood Shop. OPPOSITE: In a lacy **Tom Ford** dress (tomfordfashion.com), model Vittoria Ceretti nods to a '90s take on lingerie dressing.

Fashion Editor: Camilla Nickerson.



LAYER IT ON ME

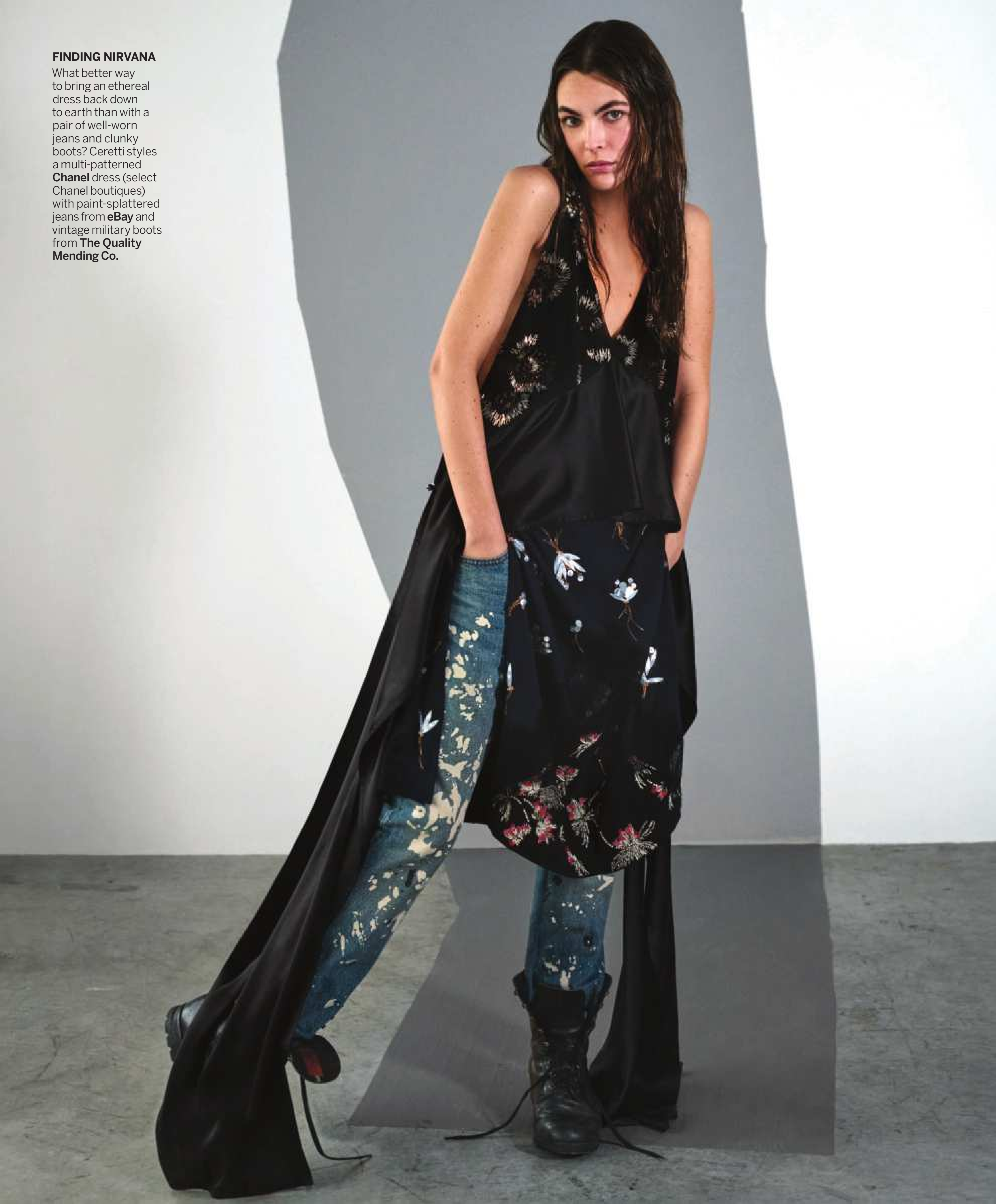
Model Liu Wen goes more-is-more with an **Hermès** jacket (Hermès boutiques), **Brooks Brothers** blazer, and a **Michael Kors Collection** shirt (michaelkors.com). OPPOSITE: Model Anok Yai keeps it easy breezy in airy **Miu Miu**; miumiu.com.

Authority Liuwen
ono vs. Bausch
Movement w/eye contact assumes

COME AS YOU ARE
Ceretti has it both ways in a **Brooks Brothers** shirt (brooksbrothers.com) and **Hodakova** pants apron (hodakova.com). OPPOSITE: Liu shadow dances in **Tod's**; tods.com.

FINDING NIRVANA

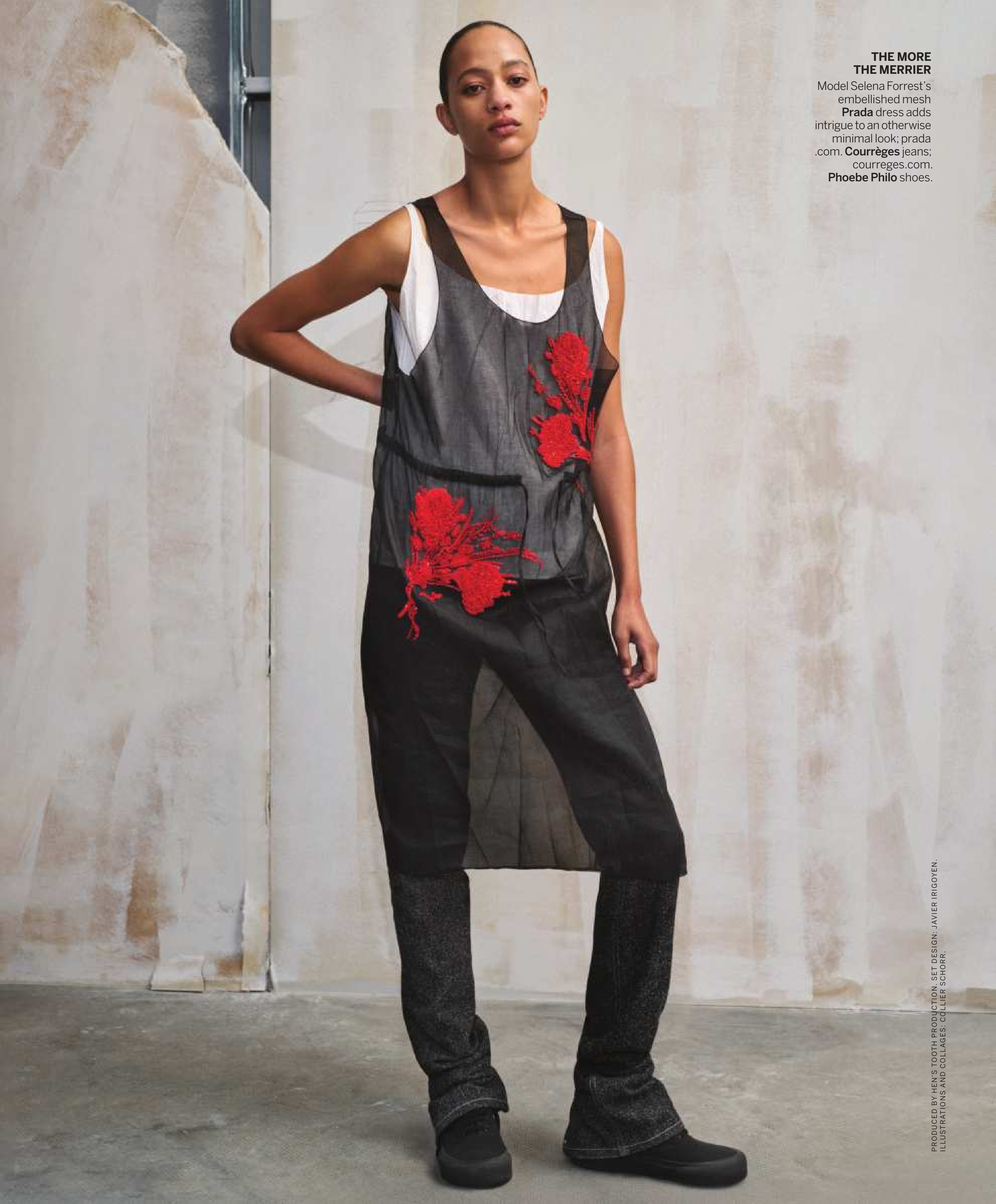
What better way to bring an ethereal dress back down to earth than with a pair of well-worn jeans and clunky boots? Ceretti styles a multi-patterned **Chanel** dress (select Chanel boutiques) with paint-splattered jeans from **eBay** and vintage military boots from **The Quality Mending Co.**



FINE LINES
Yai grounds a buoyant lace **Dior** dress with stone-washed **Dior** jeans (Dior boutiques).

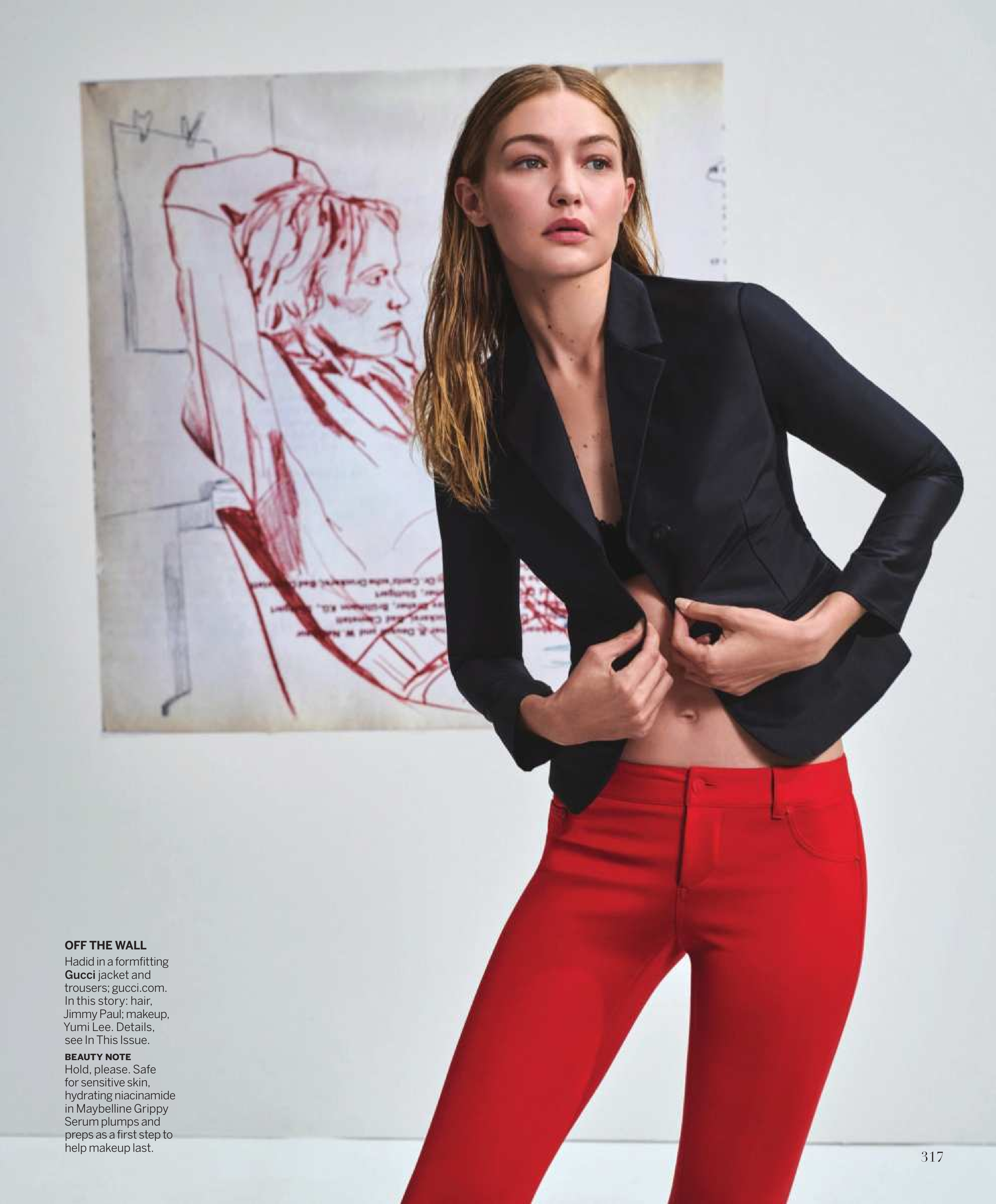
STATE OF THE ART

TOP: Model Noor Khan gets down to essentials in a **Michael Kors Collection** bodysuit (michaelkors.com) and **Calvin Klein Collection** trousers (calvinklein.us for requests). BOTTOM: A **Tom Ford** leather shirt worn over a delicate slip also does the trick; tomfordfashion.com. OPPOSITE: Model Alex Consani—in **Prada**; prada.com—makes a state of disarray look well-considered.



THE MORE THE MERRIER
Model Selena Forrest's embellished mesh **Prada** dress adds intrigue to an otherwise minimal look; prada.com. **Courrèges** jeans; courreges.com. **Phoebe Philo** shoes.

PRODUCED BY HEN'S TOOTH PRODUCTION. SET DESIGN: JAVIER IRIGOYEN. ILLUSTRATIONS AND COLLAGES: COLLIER SCHORR.



OFF THE WALL
Hadid in a formfitting **Gucci** jacket and trousers; gucci.com. In this story: hair, Jimmy Paul; makeup, Yumi Lee. Details, see In This Issue.

BEAUTY NOTE
Hold, please. Safe for sensitive skin, hydrating niacinamide in Maybelline Grippy Serum plumps and preps as a first step to help makeup last.

ARYNA UNCHAINED

ARYNA SABALENKA—TENNIS'S HARD-HITTING, HEART-ON-HER-SLEEVE WORLD NUMBER ONE—UNDERSTANDS THAT HER SPORT IS OPERA. BY ROB HASKELL. PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN KLEIN.

By the time she landed in Madrid, in mid-April of this year, Aryna Sabalenka had polished her game to such a dazzling gleam that losing was starting to seem impossible. Her famously forceful ground strokes were painting the lines. The angles seemed especially severe, the serve especially clutch. Never a great mover, she was starting to rush the net, adding even more pressure to her already smothering game. Sabalenka, 28, was playing like she believed she could do anything—and maybe she was right. After years of frenetic jostling for position at the top of the women's game, it was beginning to look like she might be not just the number one tennis player in the world—as she had been for the last 70-odd weeks—but truly dominant atop the sport in the manner of two of her idols, Serena Williams and Steffi Graf. What was more, the spring chatter among tennis mavens extended beyond her indomitable game: She seemed to be…growing up.

In Indian Wells, California, a few weeks earlier, she had defeated her recent nemesis, the taciturn Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan. Still flusterable, still a bundle of facial expressions, her grunts set off by her opponent's silence, Sabalenka had the crowd eating out of her hand. She shouted in frustration, and the stadium cheered: call and response. "She's in control," said the white-haired woman next to me. "She used to expend a lot of her energy getting angry. And then she'd lose."

Two weeks later, in Miami, Sabalenka won the second of the important spring tournaments—an elusive tennis laurel known as the Sunshine Double. It was also the month she adopted a Cavalier King Charles spaniel puppy, named Ash after tennis great Arthur Ashe, and got engaged to Georgios Frangulis, a Greek Brazilian businessman and the founder of Oakberry, an acai-bowl brand with more than 800 stores in over 50 countries. Bearing two big trophies and wearing a 12-carat oval diamond ring (conceived by Frangulis and executed by her friend the Miami-based jewelry designer Isabela Grutman), Sabalenka was reveling. She told commentators from the Tennis Channel that it was the single best month of her life.

Then April came. In Madrid, on the red clay of the Caja Mágica, for the first time in 16 matches, she lost—squandering six match points against the young 32nd-ranked American Hailey Baptiste. "That wasn't an easy one," Sabalenka says a few days later in the living room of the largest suite at the Bvlgari Hotel in Rome, where the season's clay court swing has brought her next. "The night I lost, I dreamed of all those match points. I would dream about a point, then I would wake up and I'd think about that missed opportunity."

The enfilade of rooms, with views onto the Mausoleum of Augustus, is a sanctuary of beige and gold dotted with Italian modernist furniture and century-old Gio Ponti ceramics. Sabalenka is a paragon of post-practice coziness in a brown NikeSkims zip-up shirt and pale yellow Nike sweats; her neck, earlobes, and ring finger ablaze with diamonds. I am worried about Ash, whose nomadic existence has made housebreaking all but impossible. (So far it's been grass-scented wee-wee pads in hotel suites, though Sabalenka says that he's using them faithfully.)

Losses—and there would be several more this season—present the champion with a conundrum: brush them off and move forward or study them, unpuzzle them? "It's a learning process. If I didn't really care and was like, *Whatever, on to the next one,* I wouldn't learn," she says. "That would be unhealthy. That's the tough side of being an athlete: You cannot win everything. But it's also the beauty of sport. It's nice, too, when somebody young and up-and-coming beats the world number one. If somebody won everything, it wouldn't exactly be entertaining to watch." If Sabalenka has become a star, it's in part because she understands that tennis can be opera. To grab your audience, give them human behavior across four wailed octaves: triumph and despair, love and heartache, grace and slapstick, sin and atonement.

Like the story of many elite athletes, Sabalenka's begins with a little girl who had too much energy and too few ways of defusing it. Born and raised in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, she first picked up a racket at six. "In our region, the two most popular sports are ice hockey and tennis," she explains. "My dad chose tennis." She remembers Minsk, a city of two million people, as safe, quiet, comfortable, and immaculate. Littering, she says, "would be considered animal behavior there," and the neighborhood where she spent her childhood was so secure that she could roam the streets with friends until late into the night without her mother worrying. Her father, who had been a serious hockey player before a near-fatal motorcycle crash derailed the dream of a professional career, ran a successful car-repair business. Her mother did not work, but she held two university degrees and prioritized her daughters' education. (Sabalenka has a sister, 11 years younger, who is not a tennis player and reportedly finds the sport "so boring.")

"Until I was maybe 13, we were wealthy," Sabalenka recalls. "And then my dad struggled. So many setbacks. I watched him struggle many times in his career but always get up. My parents tried hard to keep things going, and we didn't really talk about it. But I knew. Parents think we don't know, but we know." Sabalenka and her father were especially close, and it's clear that she identifies with his resilience. But he was not the sort of unyielding tennis dad of whom the women's tour, especially, has had countless examples over the years. "He was always telling me, 'If you don't like it, if you want to quit, just tell us. You don't have to force yourself to do anything.' There was a period when I was probably nine when I was close to giving up. But I saw how proud my dad was of me, and I didn't want to disappoint him. And then I fell in love again with the sport, much more than before."

Sabalenka wasn't exactly a late bloomer, but she was not pushed onto the professional tour as a 15-year-old, as many of her peers were. She did not win her first Women's Tennis Association main-draw match until she was 19, at Wimbledon. Belarus did not have a munificent state-sponsored tennis program like China, Russia, and France, and in the early days she struggled to find consistent instruction. "So many coaches told me that I was stupid, and that the only thing I could do was overhit the ball—that I would never reach the top 100," she remembers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 372

VIEW FROM HERE
"Aryna's going to say what she feels. That makes her special," says Sabalenka's fiancé, Georgios Frangulis. Sabalenka, photographed at the Faena Miami Beach, wears a Gucci dress and Material Good earrings. Hair, Sandy Hullett; makeup, Mark Carrasquillo. Details, see In This Issue. Fashion Editor: Tonne Goodman.

PRODUCED BY THAT ONE PRODUCTION. LOCATION: FAENA MIAMI BEACH.

Inside Demna's
GUCCIVERSE

In a mere dozen or so years, the Georgia-born designer has gone from Vetements' wild child to the top of Gucci. Nathan Heller revisits fashion's restless disrupter as he sets about reinvigorating a global mega-brand. Portrait by Rineke Dijkstra.

On a bright, crisp February morning in Milan, a day before a make-or-break show, Demna, once the leading iconoclast of French fashion and now the artistic director of Gucci, tours his offices with a curious air of calm.

"Obviously, I'm a bit stressed—but I feel good," he says, raking his eyes around a studio trimmed in a style unmistakably his own. A pair of leather sofas rest near full-length windows. Patchwork curtains by the artist Pia Camil trace the wall. When, a decade ago, Gucci moved into this sleek array of buildings on the industrial Via Mecenate, the brand managed to reassert its reputation as something like the Italian sports car of fashion—a streamlined, leather-bound vehicle with a brisk, outlandish kick—an image that has since become ensconced in popular culture. "My cousin, who is 16 and spends her life on Roblox, heard that I was going to Gucci and was like, 'Do you know Gucci is a word we use a lot to describe a certain state of mind? If you *feel Gucci,* it means you want to be crazy and meet people and be out there,'" Demna says. He smiles and adds, "I want to make people feel Gucci tomorrow."

Demna Gvasalia, as he was born in Georgia (he doffed his surname at the peak of his ascent at Balenciaga, five years ago), is now 45, an age when designers often arrive at the mature version of themselves. Yet his voice seemed fully formed a fashion eon ago, in 2014, the year he cofounded Vetements, and mere months before he was named Balenciaga's artistic director, further widening his reach. "It made him the most influential designer of the decade," Alexandre Samson, the fashion historian and a curator at Palais Galliera, in Paris, says. "He created characters that were very clear and reflective of an Eastern, post-USSR youth culture with no money, which looked to, admired, and despised the Western world." Demna saw that this ambivalence, covetous and critical, could speak to the social-media-ruled capitals of the West too. "It was a very strong take, mixing logo mania with deconstructive patternmaking skills and sportswear," Samson says. It was intensely personal, too, and has remained so through years of reimagining since then.

In the studio, Demna wears loose black Adidas trousers, a black T-shirt bearing the logo of the heavy metal band Slipknot, and black Gucci mules—an example of the flowing baggy silhouette that he defined. When he was young, in bourgeois Europe, his personal style was often taken as provocation: He was chased from restaurants and had foodstuffs thrown at him. Since then, it has become a key template for mainstream luxury taste.

When Demna took the helm of Gucci last summer, after a decade leading Balenciaga, the move was received much in the spirit of Long John Silver winning control of the *Hispaniola.* The brand had spent a couple of years adrift; his arrival promised to make it rollick on the waves again. "He has this complete I-don't-give-a-fuck-ness about what he does, and he knows how to garner attention, how to make a moment. He has a very good tap on the cultural conscience," the model and influencer Vivian Wilson tells me. "He designs what he wants," Kim Kardashian, a longtime friend and muse of Demna's, says. "He's just so unapologetically himself."

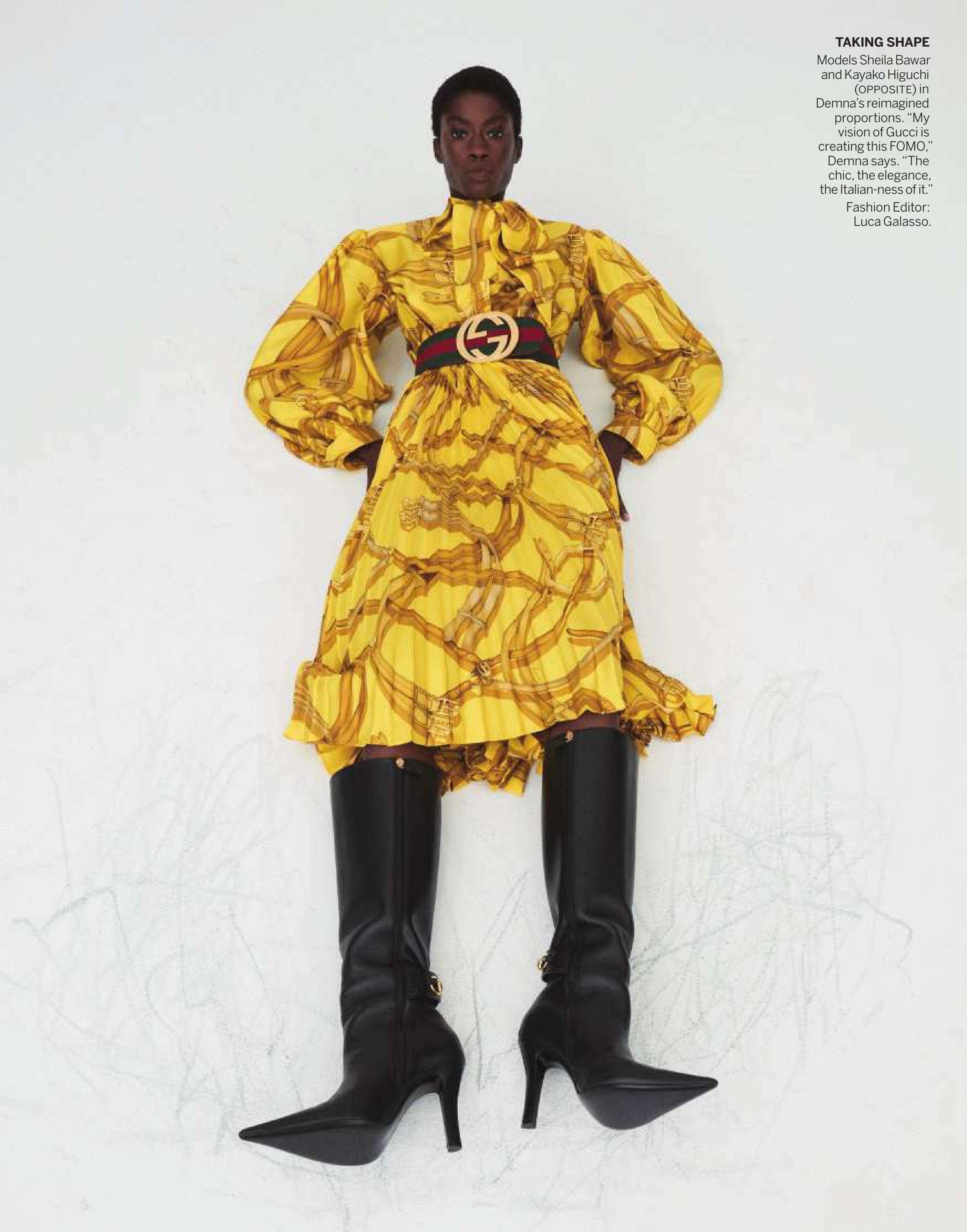
What was less certain was whether Demna's style of attention could suit so large and mainstream a brand. Gucci is the crown jewel of Kering, the luxury conglomerate, and, in a year of industry downturns, it has become a charged bellwether too. (The company's fate is so twined with Gucci's success that the brand's CEO tells me she weaned herself off checking hour-by-hour global sales figures in bed.) "The team have a big responsibility, because they are handling a mega brand," Luca de Meo, Kering's CEO, says. "Handle with care!" Demna, who trained in the Antwerp school of conceptualism, was known as an arch, biting ironist with a taste for provocation. (An early Vetements collection included what looked like yellow dishwashing gloves.) There was a risk of this restless style straining under Gucci-scale success. At least that was the anxiety: In the studio, Demna surprises me by saying that, since arriving, he has sloughed off his conceptualism for a more immediate, sensual approach.

"Gucci is a very pragmatic brand, and it's about *product.* It's liberating not to have to conceptualize a dress just to make a dress that you love," he says. "This is how fashion should be: more intuitive and emotional…either 'I hate it' or 'I love it.'" For his first Gucci showing, he presented a capsule collection (La Famiglia) in the form of a film, exploring what he describes as the brand's essential characters based on its looks of the 1970s. His pre-fall collection was a tribute to the sexy, soigné looks that defined the house in the '90s, under Tom Ford.

On this particular day, the collection he's about to show is an account of Gucci in the present: his own vision, joining him to a generation of Belgian

HAT TRICK
"There's something daring about it," Demna says of his vision for Gucci. "It's flamboyant. It's confident. You know who you are."

Fashion Photographs by Alessio Bolzoni



TAKING SHAPE

Models Sheila Bawar and Kayako Higuchi (OPPOSITE) in Demna's reimagined proportions. "My vision of Gucci is creating this FOMO," Demna says. "The chic, the elegance, the Italian-ness of it." Fashion Editor: Luca Galasso.

conceptualists, including Matthieu Blazy and Pieter Mulier, that discovered a new sensuality at large heritage brands. (So far, the moves have registered: While it is by most measures too early to see major sales effects, store traffic rose from the release of the first capsule collection.) From a rack hung with a few pieces that will appear on the runway the next day, Demna extracts coats that look like fur but are actually the more ubiquitous agricultural by-product, shearling, trimmed on a bias and stitched with muslin for an effect as light as a windbreaker in the hand.

Lightness is everything, Demna now thinks—lightness and speed. On arriving at Gucci, he discovered that all the studio's prototypes were sewn off-site. One of the first changes he made was to create a Gucci atelier on-site, so that garments could be made more quickly—more industrially—and edited not on paper but in the round, with pins and scissors.

Demna takes up a couple classic handbags that he also made lighter and more supple, and he shows off two exquisite dresses on mannequins—one purple, with a classic Gucci pattern; the other in shimmering gold sequins. Beyond these displays, his studio is curiously empty, as if it, too, has been subjected to a lightness regime. Demna seems suddenly aware of the absence.

"I don't want to show you too many things," he says with a playful smile. "I want the show to be a surprise."

Many people trace Demna's touch—if not his sensibility—to four spirited years he spent working at Maison Martin Margiela early in his career, overseeing the women's ready-to-wear collections. "He absolutely understood the process and the way of thinking behind the whole brand: the idea of repurposing"—Margiela, like Demna, was known for using vintage pieces as a starting point—"and the idea, also, of playing with society," Samson says. At Vetements, Demna applied these processes to his own style. There were hoodies with raised or pointed shoulders, oversized jackets. As a self-conscious young man, he had taken to wearing oversized clothes as a form of self-concealment; now, he began reshaping the normative body into new and unusual forms, to thrilling effects. "At the time, there was really *nothing* else happening in Paris," Julien Charrier, who started work as an intern at Vetements in 2016 and is now Demna's chief of staff, tells me. "He was bringing something that was completely out of the box, very fresh, very young, very street-culture." Within a year, the label was being worn—or imitated—by Jared Leto and Ye, then known as Kanye West. "He was always just so *cool*," says Kardashian, who met Demna shortly after Vetements launched, before there was a storefront, and spent hours simply trying on pieces at a holding warehouse in Paris in the middle of the night.

In 2016, Demna gave his first show at Balenciaga. (He continued designing for both labels for years.) He had hits like the chunky Triple S sneaker and the wide-collar Swing shirt, but he also reached for geopolitical themes. In March 2022, after the Russia-Ukraine war broke out, his show featured models trudging through a snowstorm in yellow and blue. Within three years, the house had doubled in size and had crossed a billion dollars in sales. *The Washington Post,* in 2019, celebrated Demna for "changing what we consider fashion."

LET IT FLOW

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Model Amelia Gray, musician The Dare, Higuchi, and Gray in Gucci; gucci.com. "I want to do something I haven't done before, which"—Demna smiles—"limits the possibilities."

When I met Demna for the first time, late that year, he was living in the woods, in Switzerland, with his husband, the musician Loïk Gomez. Paris had become too distracting, he told me, too claustrophobic, too much. In Switzerland he saw almost no one, but every day before work, donning high boots and an overcoat, he went tramping into nature like a figure out of Caspar David Friedrich. He was planning to relaunch Balenciaga's long-dormant couture operations. He had begun to think about the body in new and poetic ways. "I'm no longer on the dark side of the world," he told me at the time.

It couldn't last. A few months later, the whole world went dark for the COVID-19 pandemic. The remote woods of Switzerland proved an oddly perfect place to endure the lockdown, but Demna's couture debut got pushed back a year. Meanwhile, the brand's apparent provocations seemed to compound. In 2022, Balenciaga severed its ties with Ye, who had been one of its most prominent and stalwart public supporters, after Ye made what was widely taken to be antisemitic posts on social media. (In January of this year, Ye apologized in a full-page advertisement in *The Wall Street Journal.*) Only weeks later, the brand—and Demna—faced public opprobrium after releasing an ad campaign which included children, dressed in its kids line, holding teddy bear bags previously shown on the runway. To many, the bears appeared to be dressed in BDSM gear. Eagle-eyed viewers noted that another ad, for a spring 2023 collection, which included a desk messed with papers, appeared to include a page of the opinion in the Supreme Court case *United States v. Williams,* which concerned child pornography.

The fallout was severe. Close celebrity affiliates of Balenciaga, including Kardashian, reevaluated their relationships with the brand. ("That was never an issue with him," Kardashian tells me. "Once we did an investigation and we saw where things happened, we were comfortable moving forward.") Soon Demna himself issued a public apology. "It was inappropriate to have kids promote objects that had nothing to do with them," he wrote. "As much as I would sometimes like to provoke a thought through my work, I would NEVER have an intention to do that with such an awful subject as child abuse that I condemn."

"Provocation is like humor, and humor cannot be stupid," he tells me now, when I ask whether the experience compelled him to reassess the role of provocation in his life and work. "It involves a kind of nuance. Provocation is stupid when you're the only person laughing."

Demna had resolved to exit the Swiss woods. "After a while, I got so bored there," he tells me. "Boredom is such a scary and tricky thing for a creative person—I always want to discover new things." He and Gomez moved into Geneva but eventually found themselves back in Paris, stimulated but restless as ever. "I love Paris, but it only works as a long-distance relationship for me," Demna tells me. "I lived there for 15 years, which is the longest I've been in one place in my life. But I didn't like what fashion started to become while I was living in Paris full-time: safe, boring, beige, wannabe bourgeois, flat, superficial—all the things fashion shouldn't be." With the thought that a part-time life in Paris was the best kind of Paris life, he and Gomez continued looking for a second perch.

They landed in LA: the city where Demna had proposed to Gomez and a place where he had always dreamed of living. They bought a 1950s bungalow and started moving in the local mix. To this day, Demna told me, he has a much more active social life in California than in Europe.

"It's radically different, culturally speaking," he tells me. "Modernity is there. It's not for no reason that Silicon Valley happened in California: There's something about feeling more free in your head about how we do stuff, how we dress, how we express ourselves. In Europe it's much more conservative."

On taking the job at Gucci, he moved from Paris to Milan ("Also Europe, but a very different mentality, and so industrial in terms of fashion—I love it") but kept Los Angeles as his second base. "People always say, 'Oh, I get why you're there—you want to be far from fashion,' " he says. "I'm like, 'Actually, no—there I'm really in the epicenter of thinking behind how we *use* fashion.' Whereas in Italy, what I have is the product, the heritage, the history, the manufacturing—all those things that don't exist in LA."

"It's a pretty good balance," he adds. "Gucci needs both."

Backstage at his first show, Demna squeezes up and down the model lineup, which curls along a hallway thick with hairdressers and security personnel. "The feeling when someone falls in love with someone? I have it now," he tells me. "I'm also worried about one million things—the shoes, the sweat—but we can't control these things, so worrying is useless, apparently." He grins. "I read that somewhere."

The show will be held in the Palazzo delle Scintille, a large hall in Milan that Demna refashioned as a venue for Gucci. He had been inspired by the Uffizi Galleries in Florence, the house's historical and spiritual home, and, with the Uffizi's permission, had some classical statues there replicated. They line the periphery of the Palazzo's inner hall, which proceeds down coliseum-like steps to a long central corridor that will serve as the runway. "We built a museum for the show, basically," Demna says. "My idea was to put Gucci back into the spotlight of the Italian Renaissance." There were, of course, other objectives too. As guests take their seats in the Palazzo delle Scintille, someone whispers, "There are *so many* supermodels here."

> "Personally, I'm in *need* of a silhouette," Demna says, "and in September I will dare myself to show it"

True enough. The cast includes Kate Moss, Karlie Kloss, and Gabbriette, but also figures unaccustomed to the runway, such as the rappers Fakemink and Nettspend. ("I invited, in the cast, people that I always wanted to meet," Demna explains to me.)

As the house lights go down, a bright shaft appears down the runway. The model Charlie Jones steps into it, wearing a high-collar sleeveless white dress and carrying a classic black Gucci bag. The dress is tight and revealing enough to display a tattoo on the upper thigh. ("It's the most body-conscious I've ever been," Demna says. "I've had a really good therapist for 10 years and, finally, I've started to like myself.") Jones, a trans man, cross-steps briskly, followed by a gym-built man in white pants and a similar shirt. The show, like all of Demna's at Gucci, mixes men's and women's looks. "I think the idea of splitting fashion by gender is *very* old—I think there's a systemic glitch in this," he says. When the muscleman walks past, somebody cries, "*Wow.*"

Uncharacteristically for Demna, who at Balenciaga was known for his raucous, intensifying presentations, the show blooms into poetic sequined dresses and male models who walk barefoot. "It's very romantic, very like Botticelli, almost like they came off the painting in a way," he explains. "It's a different type of beauty than I've ever touched on—more classic beauty, but pushed, exaggerated." When Moss appears to end the show, in a black backless sequined dress, a cheer breaks out: An old vision is made new again.

In 1993, Demna's family fled their hometown of Sukhumi, Georgia, under threat of ethnic cleansing, and landed in Tbilisi. One of his first jobs, at 17, was translating Reuters copy for Georgian TV, and, since then, he has rarely succeeded in outrunning the news. (On September 11, 2001, as horrific reports streamed in New York, it was the young Demna who did the simultaneous translation for the Georgian audience.) Nor has he long settled in one place.

That restlessness, paradoxically, has helped to root him in his new professional home. The unimprovably named Guccio Gucci, the brand's founder and the son of a straw-hat maker, opened a shop in Florence's Via della Vigna Nuova in 1921; by the late '30s, he was making handbags. From the start, the brand offered sly winks to its self-invention: Gucci's crest did not include a soldier, as an aristocratic crest would have, but a figure carrying aloft two luggage bags. Guccio's son Aldo helped push the company into belts, shoes, and gloves and excelled at industrial improvisation. Faced with wartime scarcities, the house made handbags with bamboo handles. By 1960, it had opened a shop in New York; soon it was in London, Paris, and LA. It took on ready-to-wear fashion and jetted into the 1970s alongside celebrities such as Grace Kelly and Jackie Kennedy. In 1974, Elton John, writing of his transatlantic travels in British *Vogue,* could refer to passengers on the *SS France* as "Gucci-Pucci" and be understood.

There followed, for two decades, enough intrigue, subterfuge, betrayal, and assassination for a Jacobean play: A series of struggles between members of the Gucci family formed the basis of the 2021 movie *House of Gucci,* culminating in the murder of Maurizio Gucci and the overtaking of the brand by what subsequently became Kering. Tom Ford, then unknown, was named creative director in 1994 and within a year was credited with creating the brand's first extraordinary renaissance, moving away from bourgeois-brown fashion for a sexy, shocking new hue. A second renaissance came in 2015, with the winsomely androgynous flair of Alessandro Michele.

With Michele's departure, in 2022, the house fell back into disorder. Revenue tumbled 21 percent in 2024; in just the first half of the following year, it fell 25 percent further. Sabato De Sarno, the creative director, parted ways with the brand in 2025, and Gucci had three CEOs over two years. Last fall, Kering appointed one of its most powerful leaders, Francesca Bellettini, as Gucci's president and CEO. Her mandate, she tells me one afternoon over coffee in the Milan Four Seasons, was immediately clear: "I know that a lot of people say Gucci is like the phoenix, going up and down and reemerging from the ashes," she says. "No." She shakes her head. "We need to go up with normal growth—*and stay up.*"

Demna was Bellettini's first big notion. "I knew him from Balenciaga, which he had already decided to leave," she says. She saw a fit and put the prospect to him over dinner. "He was like, 'I can *do* it,' " she recalls. Just one thing: He wanted to study first.

"I didn't know so much about Gucci—I CONTINUED ON PAGE 374

FLOWER POWER

"He designs what he wants," says Kim Kardashian, Demna's longtime friend and muse. "He's just so unapologetically himself." In this story: hair, Esther Langham; makeup, Aaron de Mey. Details, see In This Issue.

FASHION PHOTOGRAPHS: PRODUCED BY STARKMAN & ASSOCIATES.

THE MATRIARCH

Julia Louis-Dreyfus talks to Adrienne Miller about her Broadway debut: as the genteel head of a family in *Other Desert Cities,* a celebrated play about secrets coming to light. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz.

Julia Louis-Dreyfus has reached a point in her career where she doesn't need to do anything for the first time. But on a bright summer afternoon, over a late lunch of pea soup and sashimi, she's describing not one but two new experiences: preparing for her Broadway debut and attending the Tonys.

The latter was a couple of nights ago. "I don't mean to sound corny," Louis-Dreyfus says, obviously moved. "But there's sort of an earnestness to the theater community that's beautiful. Everyone knows what the task is. And it's a mighty task."

Louis-Dreyfus's current task is becoming Polly Wyeth, the matriarch of a prominent Palm Springs family, in the revival of Jon Robin Baitz's 2011 play *Other Desert Cities,* directed by John Benjamin Hickey and opening at the Hudson Theater in October. At our lunch, in a breezy blue-and-white-striped top and white pants, Louis-Dreyfus has the warmth, charm, and ease that will serve her well as Polly—even if Polly wields these qualities with a scalpel.

Louis-Dreyfus had been looking for the right stage project for years when *Other Desert Cities* came across her desk. It's a highly literate play—Baitz's language is intelligent, witty, and caustic, in the tradition of Edward Albee—and Louis-Dreyfus was captivated. It didn't hurt that Polly is one of modern theater's most formidable creations, a country-club conservative with highly trained manners and fortress-like charm.

Short synopsis: It is Christmas Eve 2004, and Polly and Lyman Wyeth's daughter, Brooke, a writer, has returned home to Palm Springs after six years, joining her sardonic younger brother, Trip, a TV producer, as well as Polly's sister, Silda, a proud lefty uncertainly attempting sobriety. Having recovered from years of depression—treatment managed and paid for by her parents—Brooke is bearing a hand grenade: the manuscript of her forthcoming memoir (publisher: Knopf; excerpt: *The New Yorker*). It concerns her brother Henry, who, according to the family story, died in the '70s by suicide after joining a radical anti-war cult. The memoir is Brooke's reckoning with that catastrophe (Henry participated in a bombing that killed a man). But some things about the official story still seem incoherent; she doesn't have all the pieces…and isn't even sure what the pieces are.

Polly is the custodian of the family narrative, and she and Lyman consider Brooke's memoir a supreme act of betrayal, disrupting their carefully calibrated equilibrium. Ultimately, though, the play isn't entirely what it seems, and Baitz saves his most lethal move for the end—a trapdoor that reframes everything that has come before.

This is all wonderfully, wickedly funny. Louis-Dreyfus—beloved as the iconic characters Elaine Benes and Selina Meyer—will be attempting a more dangerous strain of comedy here: intimidating, elegant, poisonous, and entirely emotionally defended. Polly's humor sits atop tragedy.

The role rang all sorts of bells for Louis-Dreyfus, who grew up in New York and Washington, DC, ground zero for grande dames of the Polly Wyeth sort. "This is a woman who has her hair done a couple times a week. And her nails, the whole deal." She smiles. "I *know* these women."

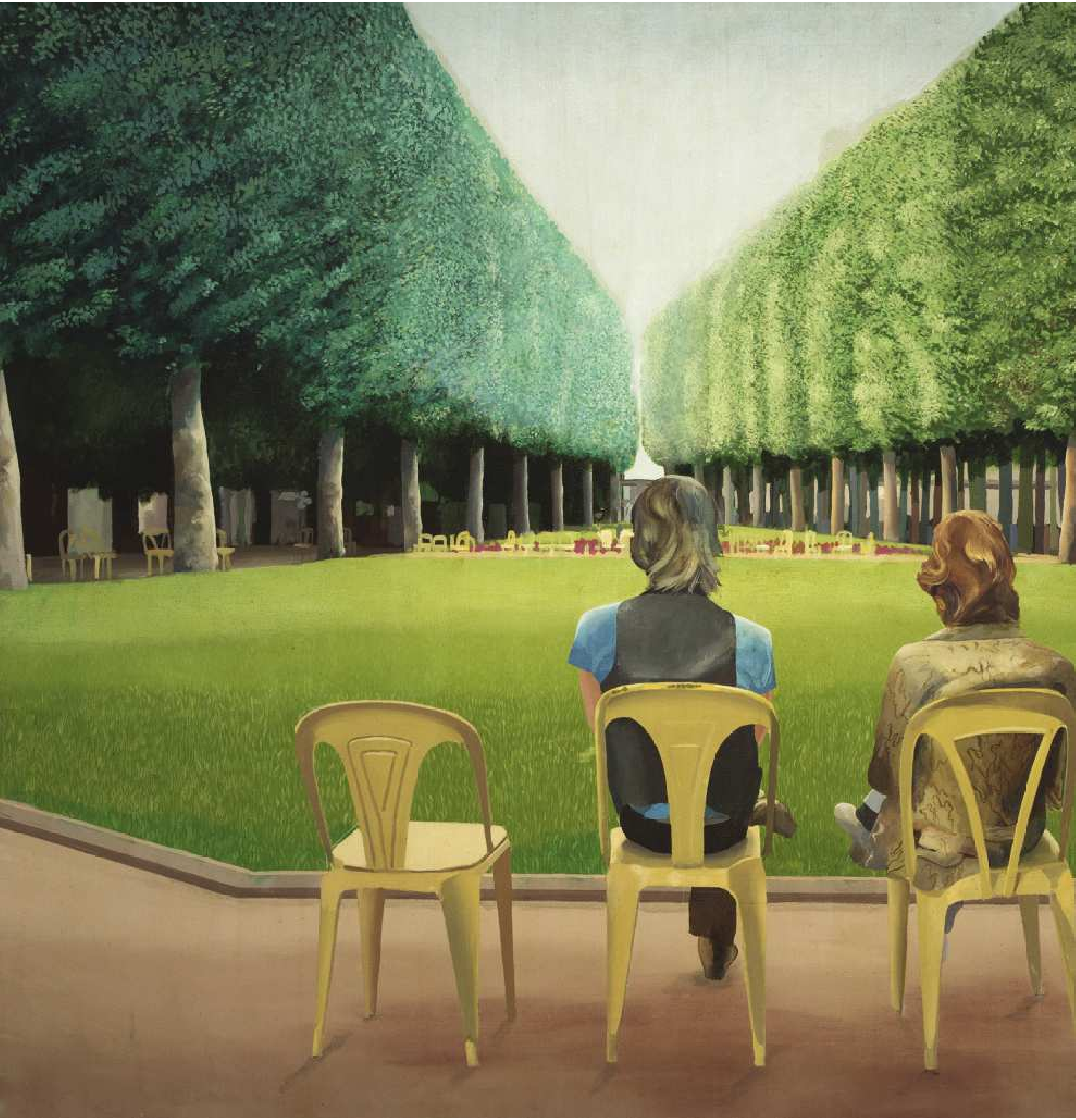
She is the mother to two grown sons with her husband, Brad Hall, and has been thinking about the weight CONTINUED ON PAGE 375

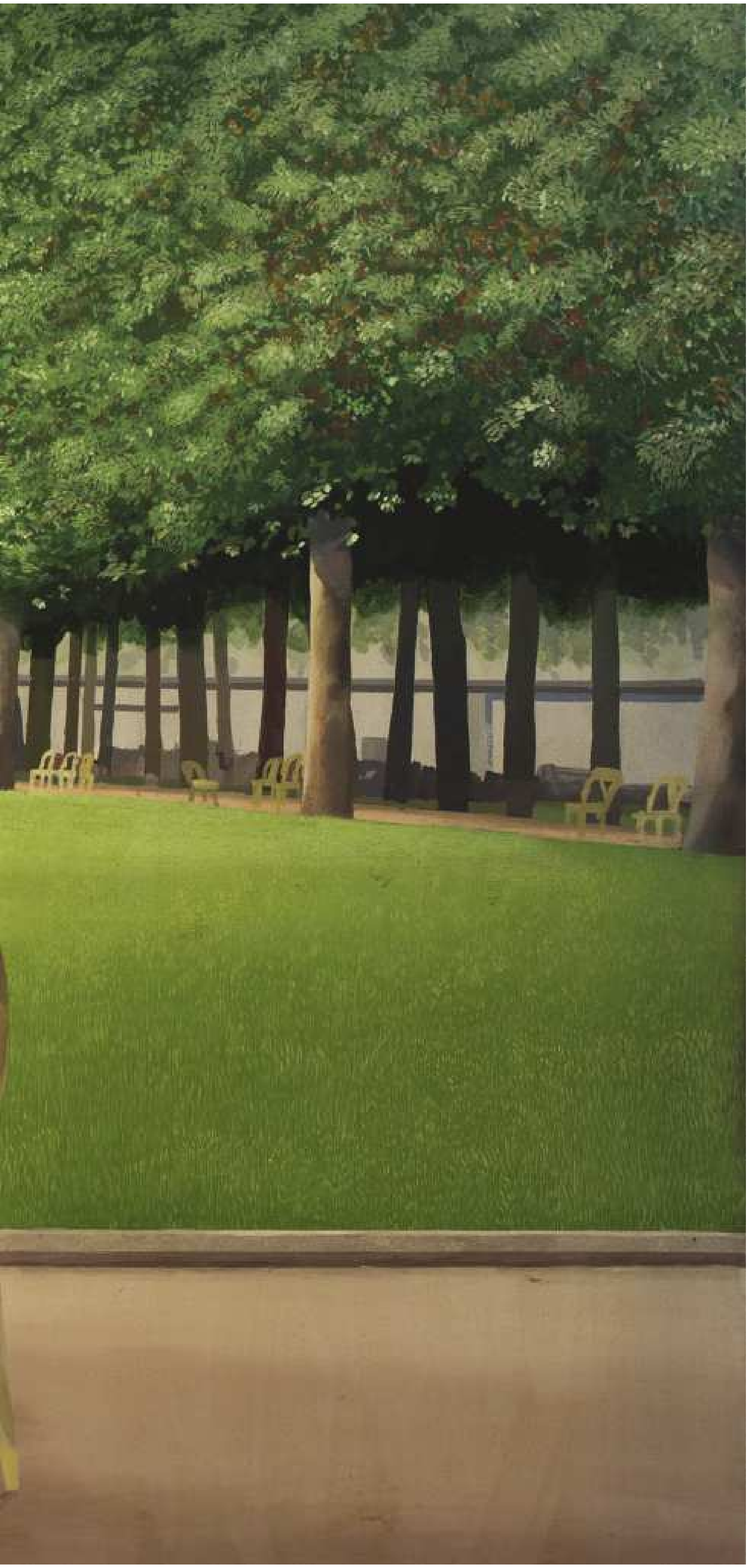
PRODUCED BY AL STUDIO. SET DESIGN: LAÏLA IBRAHIM.

GRANDE DAME

"This is a woman who has her hair done a couple times a week," says Louis-Dreyfus of her character, Polly Wyeth, in *Other Desert Cities.* Ralph Lauren Collection dress. Hair, Matthew Monzon; makeup, Romy Soleimani. Details, see In This Issue.

Sittings Editor: Tabitha Simmons.





My Last Interview With David Hockney

Dodie Kazanjian remembers the late, great English painter; her husband, Calvin Tomkins; and the conversation she wishes they'd had.

For years, I asked my husband, Calvin Tomkins (his friends called him Tad), if he would write about David Hockney. He had written profiles of so many of the giants of contemporary art, starting out in the late 1950s. Tad said he was finished with profiles; it was too much reading and research and interviewing for someone who had been declared "legally blind."

"Why not just have a conversation—two old guys shooting the breeze, talking about art and life and life and art and life in the art world over the last 60 or more years?" I'd nag. (Tad told me a story about sitting next to David at a noisy dinner one night long ago, where they both had trouble hearing each other. The only thing Tad remembered was David's declarative sentence on photography: "It's a one-eyed man looking through a little 'ole.")

That wasn't to be: David Hockney died at his home in London in June, and Tad died a couple of months earlier, in March. But they did have an hour or so together last spring on Zoom, while I interviewed David for a story timed to his monumental exhibition "David Hockney 25" at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris.

What do I remember? David's turquoise sweater and bespoke plaid suit made by his favorite tailor in Cannes; him lighting one cigarette off of another—no matches, no letup—and Tad observing.

I remember asking him about the pin he had on his lapel: "End Bossiness Soon." "I was going to put 'End Bossiness Now,' but then I thought that is in itself too bossy," he told me and Tad. "There's lots of bossy people around now, more than there used to be," he informed us, inhaling defiantly.

Tad did not write about David, but instead wrote a diary about his 100th year that was published in *The New Yorker.* It received so much attention that Tad exclaimed with a kind of childlike wonder on his birthday, "I'm back, it's a new century, and I'm famous."

Tad worked right up to the last day of his sentient life, finishing his book, *Centenarian,* which will be published next year.

Just last night, an artist friend in town from Dublin came to visit me, and we were talking about who was the most famous living artist. Of course, David Hockney dominated the conversation.

The conversation between David and Tad, two old guys talking about life in the art world, never happened—but I like to think they're having it now. □

LOOKING BACK
Hockney's painting *Le Parc des Sources, Vichy,* 1970.

FULL FLOWER

"We're pretty demanding," Ortega Pérez (wearing Zara in the gardens outside her home in northwestern Spain) says of her extended clan, many of whom work for the company today.

Sittings Editor: Karl Templer.

Family Ties

Marta Ortega Pérez, 42, leads Zara and its parent company, Inditex—the biggest fashion retailer in the world—by focusing on relationships, image-making, and a mind-blowing infrastructure. By Gaby Wood. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz.

In an industrial zone in Arteixo, at the furthest northwestern tip of Spain, amid granite quarries and aluminum merchants, Inditex, the company that owns Zara, has built a city of glass. Within it there are offices, factories, warehouses, photography studios, design departments, ateliers, a logistics center, showrooms complete with artful storefronts—all designed to fulfill desires at lightning speed.

On a top floor, the online team runs at least two fashion shoots at a time, ready to drop new products twice a week. Across a walkway in the sky, banks of sewing machines are operated by 100 seamstresses in a room the size of a small airport. On the third floor of a new building dedicated to Zara's commercial operations, a vast screen connects to shopping tills in 1,495 stores worldwide and shows what is—or isn't—selling, so the in-house designers can quickly adapt. As this detailed information filters through to the people who decide how to give the customers what they want, robots mow the expansive lawns and young forests grow. There are restaurants, of course, as well as bicycles and motorized scooters—although, if you're the boss overseeing the company's 163,000 employees and you need to get to another building in a hurry, sometimes it's quicker to take a car.

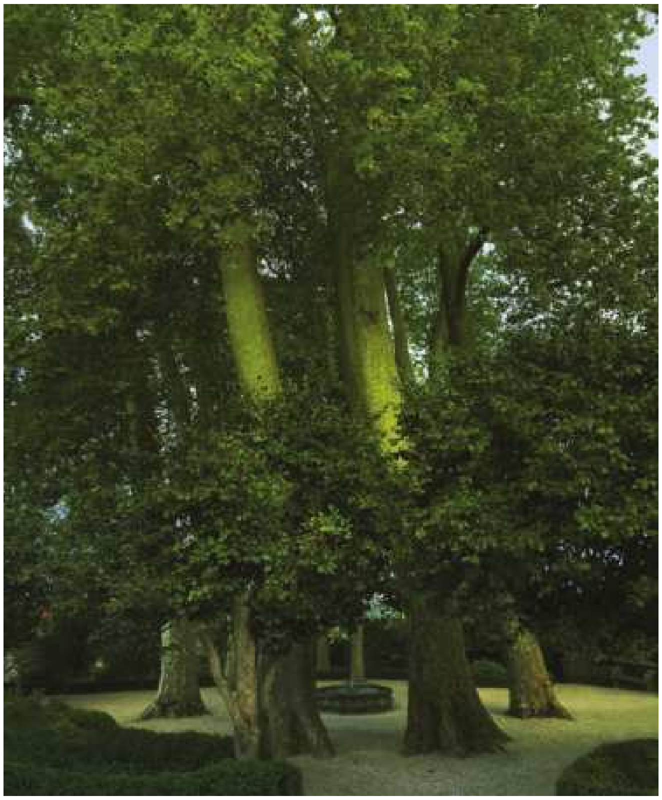
Marta Ortega Pérez, the 42-year-old nonexecutive chair of the Inditex board and the youngest daughter of its founder, presides over this futuristic complex with a democratic hand. Unassuming in her affect and understated in her dress, with a shaggy blond bob, Marta greets me warmly and leads me from the basement parking area through an indoor landscape of light. She knows everyone: Many Inditex staffers are her relatives, and she's known others for decades. A large number of them are based in La Coruña, the nearby port town where Zara has its roots. "I can't help seeing you as a five-year-old president," Loreto García Falque, a long-standing friend of Marta's mother, says with affectionate pride as she comes to greet us on the tour.

To the wider world, the Ortegas are intensely private. Marta's father, Amancio, now 90, almost never gives interviews, and Marta only rarely does. But to Inditex staff, these two are present and visible every day. "It's a very flat organization," Marta explains, leading me past her desk in the middle of an open-plan workshop, close to that of her father—who famously left school at 13 to become a delivery boy for a shirtmaker before opening the first Zara store in 1975.

"We don't have many titles. It's a very big company, but for us, from the inside, it doesn't feel that way. In the end we're like a family, and I think that's what creates the magic."

Under Marta's aegis, Zara has elevated itself by association while remaining true to what she describes as its founding premise: that "beautiful things, well-designed things, shouldn't be only for certain people. Social class," she adds, "has nothing to do with style." She has forged unions with designers and cultural figures, from Steven Meisel to Vincent Van Duysen, Marisa Berenson to Luca Guadagnino, and John Galliano to Bad Bunny, turning Zara from "a high street thing," as her friend Pieter Mulier, the Versace chief creative officer, puts it, to "a brand that's not only bigger in turnover, but bigger in impact on culture, on aesthetics, and on fashion." The results speak for themselves: Inditex is the world's largest fashion retailer and also owns brands such as Massimo Dutti and Bershka, but the various incarnations of Zara and Zara Home account for almost three quarters of its revenue. Marta has worked for the company for just under 20 years and has been chair of the board for four. Last year, Inditex's net profit was 6.2 billion euros, up 91.8 percent on the last financial year under the company's previous leadership. They're also ahead of their competitors in terms of sustainability: According to François Souchet, founder of Swanstant, a firm that forecasts how climate affects economic outcomes, "Inditex has been both posting the strongest operating margin in the industry and the lowest emission intensity."

Aside from Marta herself, a few persuasive factors recur in conversation with Zara's collaborators. First, the family feeling appears to be contagious. "There's something about the conviviality of that particular company," says the photographer David Sims, who has worked for Zara for 15 years. "It's really relaxed and a lot of fun." Second, creative people are supported in doing what they want. As Marta's friend Linda Evangelista puts it, "This is what I love about Marta: She lets the artist shine. She hires people for who they are, and her admiration is genuine." And—not least—seemingly every fashion insider who has visited the Inditex headquarters at Arteixo has been stunned by its systems.



TALL ORDERS

The gardens at Ortega Pérez's home were designed by the acclaimed English landscape architect and garden designer Tom Stuart-Smith.

When the Zara team got together with Bad Bunny to discuss a multipart collaboration, Marta explains, they shared a language and a sense of the importance of family. But it was the company's innovative infrastructure that allowed them to throw in the Super Bowl Halftime Show. As Marta's husband, Carlos Torretta Echevarría, who, as Zara's head of communications, was involved in the discussions, points out: Who else could make clothing for 700 dancers in two weeks?

Galliano, whose first collection for Zara will hit stores in late September, first came to Arteixo when Marta invited him to give a talk to Inditex staff. "I was quite blown away," he tells me. "It was like a James Bond setup, really, how stuff could be moved around the world. I was like, 'Wow—I've worked in ready-to-wear, darling, but this: This is incredible!' "

In a private room at Inditex HQ—I've lost track by now of which building we're in—Marta and I are served lunch. Everything is discreetly delivered: the opening salad, the filet steak, the chocolate dessert molded into a cacao pod. The room is filled with the comforting smell of Zara Home's Basilicum candles. The aura is luxurious. And yet, Marta makes clear as we eat together, "we're a long way from wanting to be a luxury brand. Luxury does an incredible job and inspires us all a lot, but we don't want to change what Zara is. We want to produce a well-made product that reaches the maximum number of people."

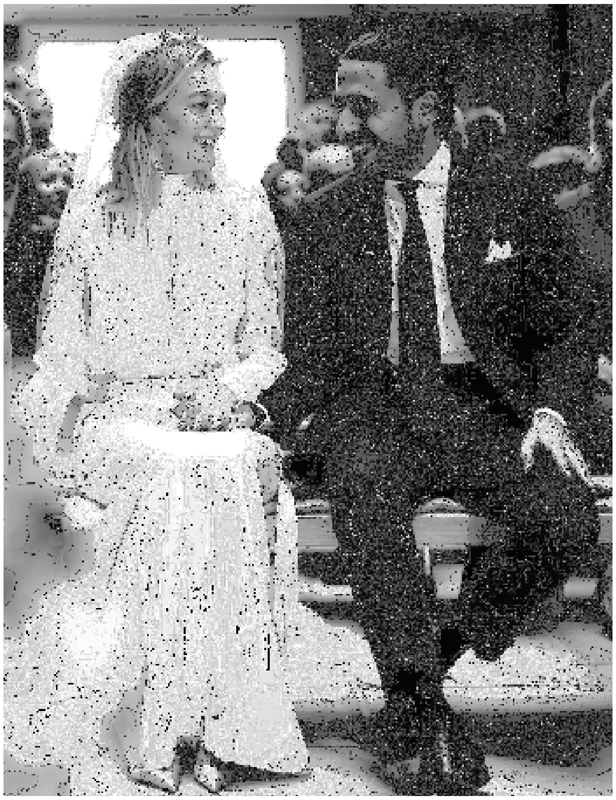
After the brand celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, they moved on quickly. "We're not great celebrators here," Marta says with an ironic smile. "Yes, those 50 years deserved to be honored, but the past is more important as a reminder of our mistakes—it's better not to repeat them than to celebrate our successes."

If this sounds tough, it's in keeping with the Ortega family's exacting nature. ("We're very demanding," Marta says of her entire clan.) Karl Templer, a Zara creative director, tells me that, because of the company's work ethic—Marta's in particular—"you want to do a really good job for her. She inspires people to bring something to the table."

Over the months that I've observed Marta, I've wondered how best to convey her particular mix of warmth and cool. There's no question that she is, as people who know her well have said to me in Spanish, *cercana*. The word literally means "close" and loosely translates, in this case, as a gift for friendship. Marta is a noticer—of how you feel, of what you like, of whether you might need anything. If anyone at work is ill, they'll get a message from Marta. If she invites you to dinner, your whole family is welcome. If you're her friend, she'll never miss a birthday. After she bonded with Galliano over their love of Ernest Hemingway, Galliano was astounded to soon receive a signed first edition of *A Farewell to Arms,* with the pages still uncut. When Inditex's CEO, Óscar García Maceiras, told me that attention to detail was one of Marta's strengths, I expected him to mean the design of a sleeve or the buckle on a bag; the example he gave instead was this: He had told Marta of an employee working at a Zara store in a faraway country who wanted to be closer to their family in Spain. Marta immediately got in touch and found the employee a job nearby. "I'll tell you something," Evangelista says, "she's a real woman's woman. Very supportive, very family-oriented."

Yet Marta also has the low-key allure of someone not entirely easy to impress. She is "rigorous and mathematical and direct," in Pieter Mulier's expression—something he finds rare in the fashion world. "She has a very clear opinion, and you get it in a second." She can be laconic. Her dark, expressive eyebrows and the deep timbre of her voice stand in entertaining contrast to the bounding energy of her husband, who is urgently sociable.

Pierpaolo Piccioli understood these different sides to her. Marta had been his client for two years when he designed four Valentino couture outfits for her wedding in 2018. He imagined three sleek, understated looks, and then had another idea: a romantic pink moiré strapless gown with an exaggerated bow. He suggested she wear it with combat boots. "It's not me," Marta said instantly. Five minutes later, she texted back: "You're right." She danced in it until three in the morning.



MAKING THE TEAM
Ortega Pérez and her husband, Carlos Torretta Echevarría (now Zara's head of communications), at their 2018 wedding in La Coruña.

Zara's life began when Amancio Ortega and his first wife, the late Rosalía Mera, decided to start making quilted bathrobes and lingerie in their living room. The lingerie, which was considered somewhat risqué, met a need in the Spanish consumer that was beginning to be admissible as the Franco regime came to an end. The first Zara store opened in the couple's hometown of La Coruña, and the company expanded across Spain and Portugal over the next decade. In 1989 they opened a shop in New York, giving rise to the phrase "fast fashion" when the *The New York Times* reported that Zara catered to customers who "change their clothes as often as they change the color of their lipstick."

Into this world was born a girl who noticed everything. Those who knew Marta as a child recall her large, watchful eyes and attest to her being as observant then as she is now. The only child of Ortega and his second wife, Flora Pérez, Marta spent a lot of time with her maternal grandmother while her parents were working at Zara. "My grandmother is probably the person who's had the greatest impact on me," Marta reflects. "She brought up eight children. She never cared where anyone was from or what they did for a living—the only things that mattered to her were whether people were hardworking and honest."

While her grandmother helped her make clothes for her dolls, it was a British nanny who first took Marta horseback riding in La Coruña. By the age of 10, she was hooked.

"I competed as a show jumper for many years," she says—and while she didn't jump professionally, it became a big part of her life. When she went to business school in London, she competed on weekends, and when she started working on the Zara shop floor on the King's Road, she did the same. After she had her eldest son, Amancio, with her first husband, the Olympic show jumper Sergio Álvarez Moya, she returned to competition but increasingly found that she wanted to spend her weekends with her son. "Now I have less time and more children," she says succinctly. "When my daughter was born, I stopped—to compete at that level, you need to train every day, and I wasn't doing that."

Marta retains the drive of an athlete—with some unusual specifics. She describes show jumping as "a thankless sport," simply because "most of the time, you lose." What it taught her was not only a lesson in humility but a sensitivity to others that has clearly been useful for her life in business. "The most special thing about it is that you're there with a living being," she explains. "Any athlete has to be fit, but in this case both you and the horse have to be in good shape. It's not a racket or a football—it's alive, and it depends on you."

Now Marta shares competition horses in Holland with the son of her original trainer, and she has a riding school in La Coruña that, among other things, offers therapy for children with disabilities. "I like not having lost touch with that world," she says. "It gave me so much for so long."

Marta met Carlos Torretta Echevarría in January 2016 through a mutual friend. They all had dinner at Sant Ambroeus in the West Village—Carlos was working at a branch of the Elite modeling agency and had lived in New York for almost a decade. By April they were dating, and at the end of that year he moved back to his native Spain. They married in La Coruña two years later, and after a while Carlos—whom Marta says is "like a walking encyclopedia"—joined what he describes as "the biggest family business in the world."

"They're a fantastic couple to spend time with," says Mulier, who enjoys summer holidays with them in Greece, eating and talking and waterskiing. "We're yin and yang," Carlos says affectionately. "I speak a lot, she speaks less. She's very organized and I'm more unorganized. You know, I'm sure it drives her crazy a million times a day, but in the end I think it works well. It's also very good for me," he adds, "to have someone like her who puts me on the right path." They still argue about the weather, Marta being fond of Galicia's British-style climes and Carlos being of a more Mediterranean bent.

Amancio, now 13, was joined by Matilda (6), Manuel (2)—and, most recently, a long-haired Jack Russell puppy. Their home in La Coruña—next door to Marta's parents'—has a calm atmosphere not unlike the one Zara has sought to create in The Apartment spaces within its stores; their nearby country house has a garden designed by the British landscape designer Tom Stuart-Smith. Each weekday Marta gets up at 6:45, goes to the gym ("normal training and some Pilates, nothing very exciting"), has breakfast with the kids, takes them to school, and drives to the office. In the evenings, she prefers reading to watching TV. Current favorite authors include

SASKIA LAWAKS.

ALL SYSTEMS GO
Ortega Pérez in the Inditex headquarters. When John Galliano visited the complex, he compared it to "a James Bond setup.... I was like, 'Wow—I've worked in ready-to-wear, darling, but this: This is incredible.' " In this story: hair, Damien Boissinot; makeup, Lucia Pica.

PRODUCED BY AL STUDIO. SET DESIGN: MARY HOWARD.

Ottessa Moshfegh and the Moldovan Romanian writer Tatiana Tibuleac. "I love a bookshop," she says. (She loves a stadium concert just as much, whether it's Bad Bunny or her friend Rosalía.)

It's not always easy to follow in your father's footsteps, especially when he's forged such a globe-spanning path, but Marta says she doesn't feel that pressure. "For me, it's a source of pride. I don't want to be like my father, because no one ever will be. I feel like I'm in a good moment of life," she explains: "I do a job I enjoy every day, I work with incredible people every day. To be able to do that in a city where I can be close to my family is an enormous privilege—not just my children but my extended family, who support me a huge amount."

David Sims's quadruple-height studio is a converted tram shed in North London, its cream-colored tiles reminiscent of those in old London Underground stations. On the day of the Zara shoot, one of the models, Karolina Spakowski, stands in a black slip dress against a gray infinity wall. The Bee Gees are playing through the speakers, and fans are gently blowing three different kinds of air toward her. Sims is shooting 12 pieces of clothing for The Item, a capsule that drops once a week, with everything overseen by Templer. Marta stands at the back of the studio in brown cargo pants and a knitted yellow top, hugging a leather-bound notebook. Two of her colleagues are beside her.

In November, Sims's work will form the latest photography exhibition at the Marta Ortega Pérez (MOP) Foundation in La Coruña. Photography, and fashion photography in particular, is something she's always loved. "In my head, I always thought I'd take photos," she tells me.

As a teenager, Marta would tag along with her mother to Zara shoots. "There was one in the Guggenheim in Bilbao," she remembers, "before it opened to the public. It was a Spanish photographer, and the models were Amber Valletta and Carolyn Murphy. I would have been 14 or 15—I went to watch them at work whenever they'd let me."

Though Marta's love of fashion was already clear then (she remembers traveling to New York with her mother and buying a pair of gray patent boots from Marc Jacobs), she now buys the kind of clothes that Zara is sometimes accused of emulating. (In 2012, Zara won a lawsuit from Christian Louboutin, allowing them to make red-soled shoes.) When I ask her about intellectual property, Marta offers a graceful response: "Fashion is a shared language," she says. "How you speak it is what marks the difference between some people and others. I have great respect for what designers do—I'm a client and admirer of many of them." She names people who have become friends—Mulier, Piccioli, and more. "Phoebe Philo, of course; Sarah Burton is doing incredible work. I've always been an absolute fan of Mrs. Prada. Willy Chavarria, Matthieu Blazy, Jonathan Anderson. The designer I've always admired the most is John Galliano, and I'm lucky enough to be working with him."

The respect is mutual. Piccioli describes Marta as "close to the fashion system" and offers a high compliment: She always, he says, spots the pieces of his that are "more for a connoisseur." "When you wear couture, you have to know why a black dress is couture while an embroidered dress is ready-to-wear," he explains. "You have to know that couture is about the hidden parts. It's not about what you show off. She really gets that point."

Whether fashion is one language or many, Marta is a perfectly placed translator. "Fast fashion, if I can call it that, wasn't welcomed with open arms initially," Sims points out. "And that might still be the case. But because Marta is such a

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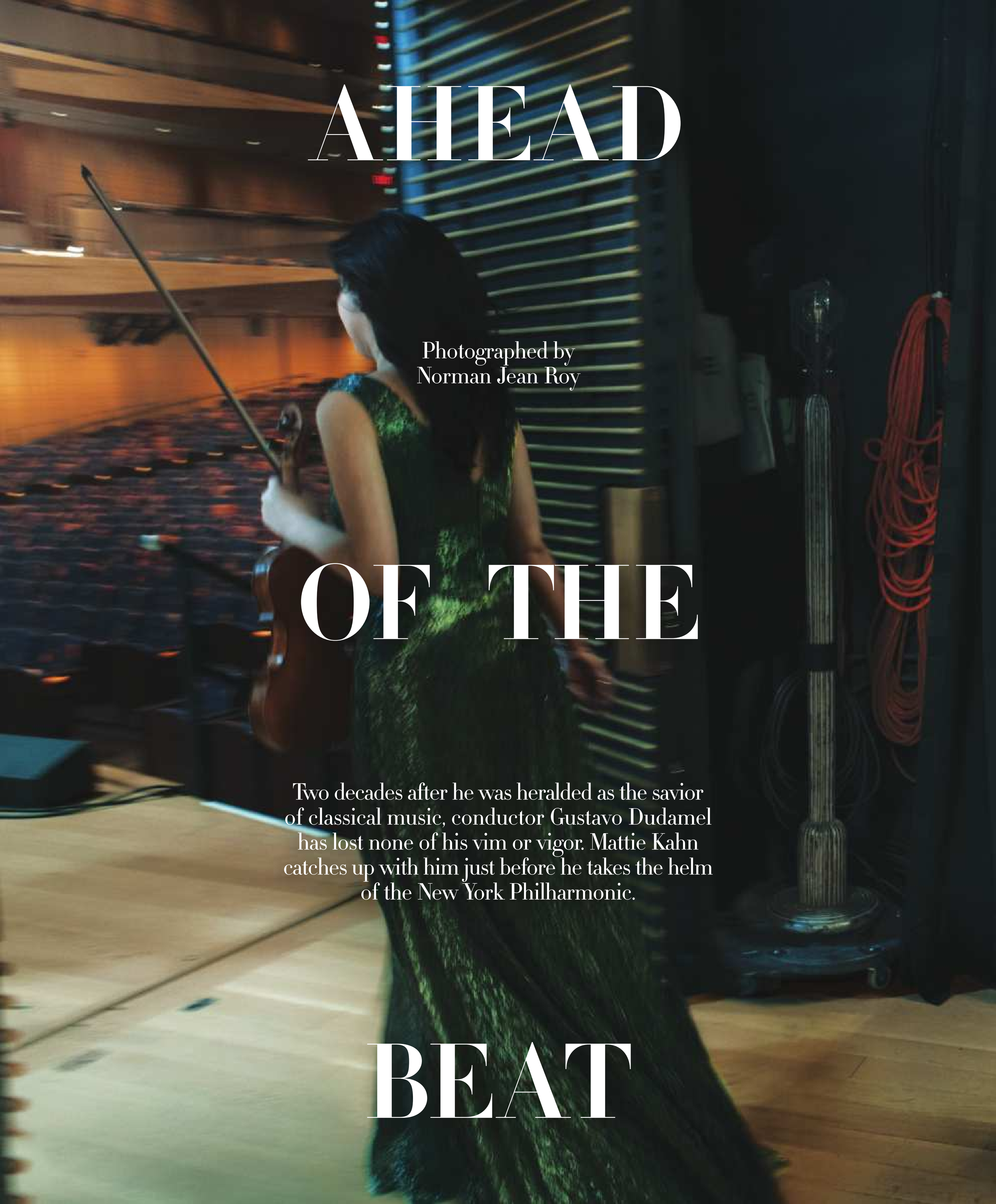

AHEAD OF THE BEAT

Photographed by
Norman Jean Roy

Two decades after he was heralded as the savior of classical music, conductor Gustavo Dudamel has lost none of his vim or vigor. Mattie Kahn catches up with him just before he takes the helm of the New York Philharmonic.

OFF BOOK Dudamel, photographed backstage at David Geffen Hall, in a Dolce & Gabbana coat. Dunhill shirt and bow tie. Sittings Editor: Michael Darlington.

The rain is unpleasant, but it seems fitting that the heavens have opened just as Gustavo Dudamel's car pulls up outside New York's historic United Palace theater. Sunshine is sweet and soundless. Storms can keep a beat.

It's spring, and the onetime wunderkind conductor—now a respectable 45—is still a few months from becoming the music and artistic director of the New York Philharmonic. Since the appointment was announced in 2023, he has been making a long and ecstatic first impression on his new metropolis. In April, at an annual fundraising gala, the philanthropist Barbara Tober spoke of Dudamel as "our gift from God." A few weeks later, a friend whose musical tastes lean more Shaboozey than Schubert posted a selfie from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, with Dudamel's signature curls bouncing in the background. At the end of a concert I attended this spring, women with hearing aids hooted and hollered. A man in a tux stomped his feet. After a requisite encore, hordes of people spilled out onto the plaza at Lincoln Center, buzzing over the ethereal arrangements of Igor Stravinsky.

Today, at the United Palace theater in Washington Heights, Dudamel is received by an audience of more composed staffers. "Hola, maestro," says a porter as Dudamel strides across the lobby. The Venezuelan-born conductor greets him in return. He has arrived to rehearse the first-ever joint performance by the 184-year-old New York Philharmonic and the 25-year-old Spanish Harlem Orchestra. Dudamel will hold the baton, combining classical and salsa music with the loving finesse of a musician raised on both. The conductor has long reveled in genre mash-ups that might otherwise sound like AI prompts. *What would a collaboration*

THE REMIX Dudamel pays homage to the greats but is not afraid to let in fresh influences. Here he wears an Hermès shirt and Emporio Armani trousers. Rolex watch. In this story: grooming, Levi Monarch. Details, see In This Issue.

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between Foo Fighters and Beethoven sound like? His repertoire at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he spent the past 17 years, included rousing renditions of Mahler and Philip Glass, as well as the *Star Wars* score. He has conducted at Coachella, voiced a character for the *Trolls World Tour* movie named Trollzart, and has inspired, it's said, the book and series *Mozart in the Jungle.* This past summer, he conducted the Muppets in a version of "Seven Nation Army" at the World Cup Halftime Show.

Later tonight, the two orchestras will perform Leonard Bernstein's *Times Square: 1944* ("New York, New York! / It's a helluva town!") and Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos's vivacious *Toccata.* Dudamel and I meet before the rehearsal in his dressing room—stocked with Brazil nuts and popcorn—where a clutch of assistants and flacks awaits his instruction. Still, he brushes off reports of Dudamania. "It's not only that I move beautifully my hands in front of an orchestra," he says, using the lilting syntax of someone who still translates from Spanish to English. "It's that we have to go deep, and they have to feel that it's honest."

Dudamel was born in Barquisimeto, one of Venezuela's bigger cities. His father, Oscar, is a classically trained trombonist and sometimes performs with him. (He'll be among the musicians at the United Palace.) His mother, Solange, sang. He picked up his first instrument as a preschooler, tapping out a rhythm on a güira, a percussion instrument, while his father was playing. "Who's that?" his father asked, hearing the beat.

He insists that he demonstrated no outsize talent then, but his interest was obvious, and it occurred to Oscar to enroll his son—now with a violin—in El Sistema, Venezuela's beloved and famed nationwide music program for children. His grandparents adored Gustavo, but they worried about his prospects. "Who will be able to stand all the noise in the house?" his grandfather once asked. A professional musician uncle was more encouraging, introducing him to the organ and the cuatro, a Latin string instrument. "He said, 'Look, son, you're going to play all of this music around the world,' " Dudamel recalls.

At El Sistema, intensive rehearsals were held over the weekend, and Dudamel made his closest friends in the program. One morning their conductor was late, so Dudamel stood in front and mimed the motions. His peers responded to him—he could command a room. El Sistema founder José Antonio Abreu took Dudamel on as a protégé, moving him to the first chair position in the violin section, then encouraging him to conduct. Abreu told his pupil he had duende, literally Spanish for "goblin" but more lyrically meant to describe a force animating great artists. "It is this kind of instinct," Dudamel recalls Abreu telling him. "That's duende."

Dudamel was just 23 when he emerged on the international circuit, winning a prestigious conducting competition in Germany and immediately radiating the kind of star power more often associated with pop princes and athletes than classical musicians. Orchestras from all over the world began to invite him to perform with them, appearances that earned both press and speculation about his future.

So lavish was the praise that Matías Tarnopolsky, now the president and CEO of the New York Philharmonic, then the orchestra's newly appointed artistic administrator, asked Dudamel if he could visit him in Caracas. "I got on a plane in 2006, within weeks of starting the job," Tarnopolsky recalls. Dudamel ferried him around in a Mustang, and the two established an easy connection—Dudamel playing folk music for the Buenos Aires–born Tarnopolsky that he hadn't heard since childhood while his passenger gripped the dashboard. ("I thought, Oh my God, I'm going to die here," Tarnopolsky remembers.) Dudamel made his debut in New York in 2007.

He performed in Chicago around the same time, and in the midst of the audition was whisked away after his first rehearsal on the private plane of then president of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Deborah Borda, who was eager to sign him. She flew him back to Chicago the following morning, with the unsuspecting orchestra having no idea he'd been hired out from under them. Dudamel officially joined the LA Phil at 28 and went on to hire almost half of its current musicians over the course of his tenure. The feel of the orchestra quickly shifted. He was loved "from day one," says Julie Andrews, who happens to be on the board. "They moved, and they swayed, which they had never done before. He freed them up."

One of the achievements that most heartens Dudamel, however, is his part in creating the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (YOLA), which he modeled on El Sistema. The group provides instruments and music education to children from all across Los Angeles, including from its poorer neighborhoods. Not long after it started, Jamie Bernstein, daughter of the iconic composer-conductor Leonard Bernstein, encountered a clip of Dudamel conducting YOLA's rendition of the mambo from *West Side Story.* "Some of them looked like they couldn't have been more than 14," she recalls of the musicians, "and they were just playing the daylights out of it. I thought, Wow, I've never seen anything like this before. And then I thought, Oh, it's the same vibe as my dad." She went to Venezuela to meet Dudamel, and the two have been friends ever since. Years ago she surprised him with one of her father's vests. "He just put it right on," she remembers.

Jamie is not the first to compare Dudamel to Bernstein, a titanic predecessor and the only other conductor whose name might reasonably appear CONTINUED ON PAGE 376

CON BRIO
Juilliard students and musicians—FROM LEFT, violinist Maude Cloutier, oboist Celia Wojcik, violinist Maya Kilburn, pianist Jude Giddens, cellist Noa Lia Mogle, and flautist Phoebe Rawn—find a moment to play around at Lincoln Center. Cloutier wears a **Loewe** top (loewe.com) and **Bode** shirt. Kilburn in **Chanel**; select Chanel boutiques. Giddens wears an **Auralee** suit; auralee.jp. Rawn in a **Lemaire** jacket (lemaire.fr) and **Tory Burch** top and skirt (toryburch.com).

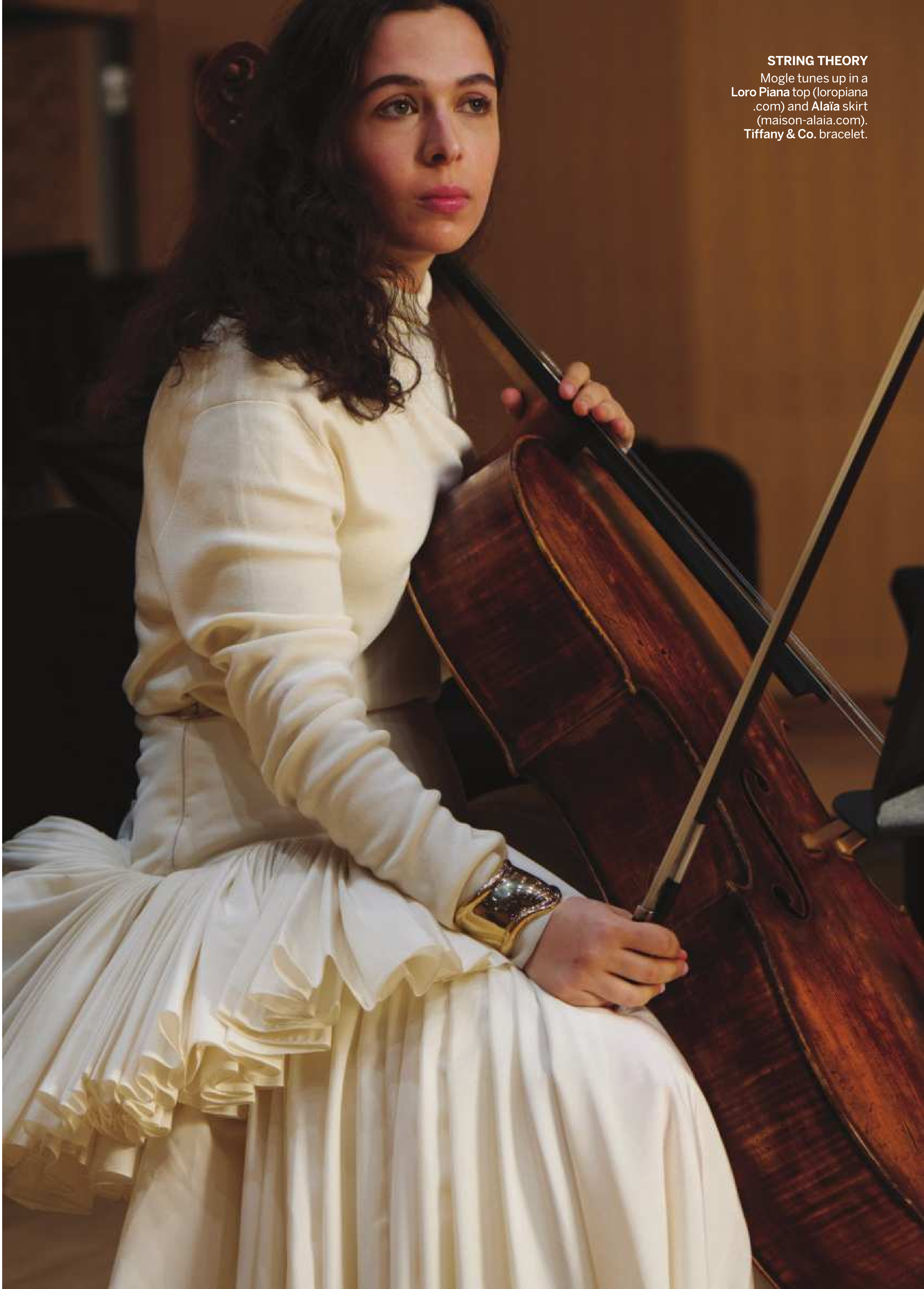
Fashion Editor: Miyako Bellizzi.

Crescendo

Conductor Gustavo Dudamel's arrival at the New York Philharmonic has triggered a rhapsody in the city's classical-music scene—particularly among the young virtuosos of the Juilliard School, shot here with some of the Philharmonic's key players. Photographed by Theo Wenner.

PITCH HITTERS

"When you have music, dance, and drama all working side by side, the experience is multidimensional," says Juilliard president Damian Woetzel. "It's a relationship of curiosity and opportunity." FROM LEFT: Dance major Arayah Lyte lounges in an **Alaïa** dress; maisen-alaia.com. **Prounis** earrings. Giddens wears **Burc Akyol**; burcakyol.com.



STRING THEORY
Mogle tunes up in a **Loro Piana** top (loropiana.com) and **Alaïa** skirt (maison-alaia.com). **Tiffany & Co.** bracelet.

PUTTING ON AIR

“As the world becomes more modern, the deep human emotions that are the frameworks of classical music stay the same,” says Wojcik, a senior at Juilliard. “I love putting on Rachmaninoff’s *Symphony No. 2* and just letting myself feel everything.” Wojcik in **The Row**; therow.com. **Tiffany & Co.** necklace.

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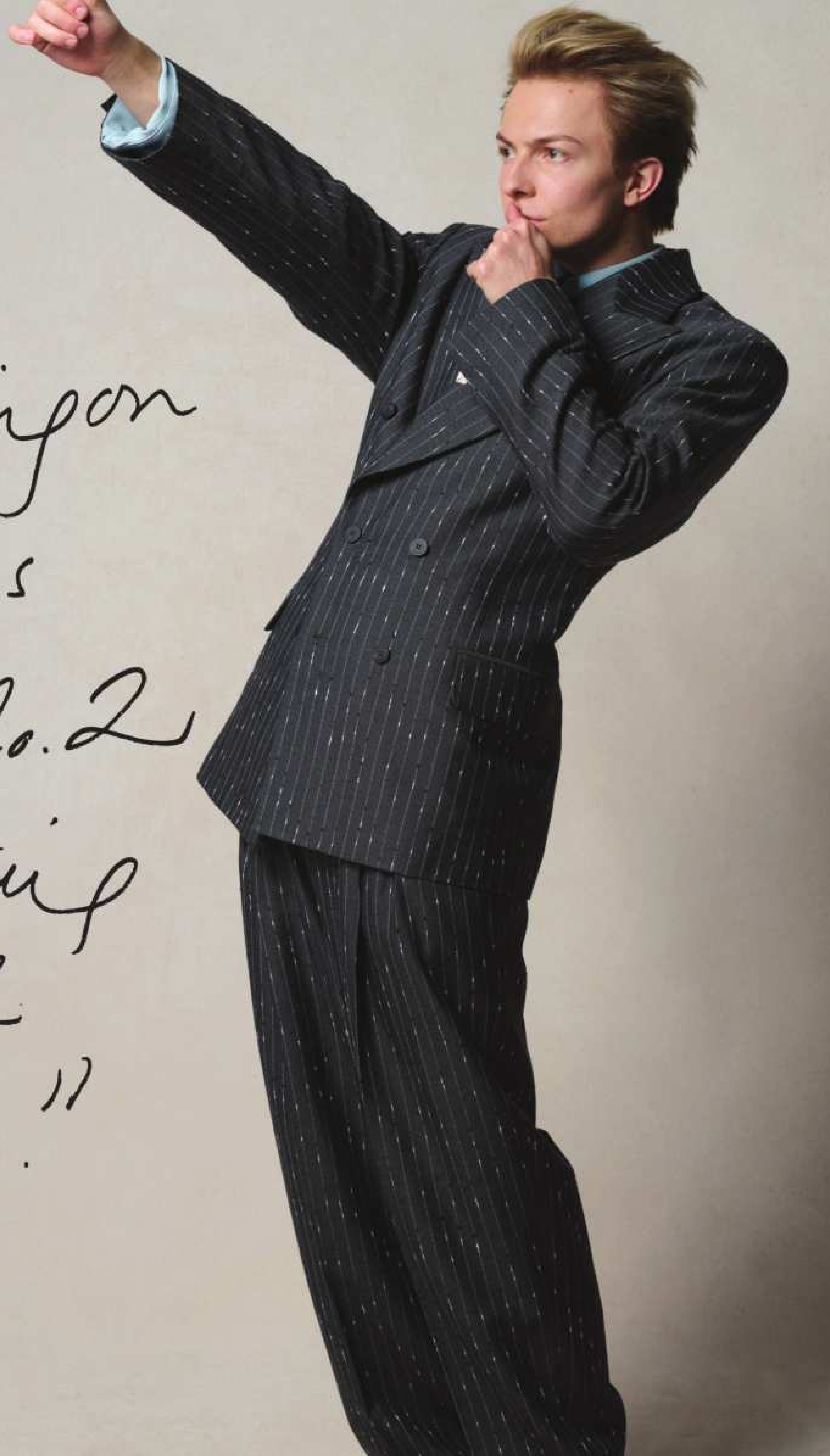

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AROUND THE HORN
Dance student Holden Kunowski plays air trombone in a **Jacquemus** suit; jacquemus.com.

MAKING OVERTURES
Cellist Ari Peraza-Webb wears a **Sacai** jacket; sacai.jp for similar styles. **Lié Studio** earrings.

LIVE TAKE
Jazz vocalist Ava Preston hits the high notes in a pink lace **Erdem** confection; erdem.com. **Sophie Buhai** earrings.

PUT A BOW ON IT

"Pieces of art created centuries ago communicate something that, somehow, people in 2026 can still relate to," Kilburn, a recent Juilliard grad, says. **Fendi** dress. **Tiffany & Co.** necklace and ring. Rawn in **Celine. Bvlgari** watch.

"Pieces of art created centuries ago communicate something that, somehow, people in 2026 can still relate to."

ON THE MOVE
Dancer Haley Beck—in a **Colleen Allen** top (colleenallen.com), **Max Mara** skirt (maxmara.com), and **Cartier** watch—feels the music.

PRETTY SUITE

ABOVE LEFT: Beck wears a **Khaite** dress; khaite.com. **Lié Studio** earrings. ABOVE RIGHT: Rawn's loose **Celine** dress and flowing golden waves offer a touch of nonchalance. **Lara Sonmez** ring. OPPOSITE: Wojcik—flanked by composition student Vincent Zhang and tuba player Lau Yeung Wong—wears a **Maison Margiela** dress; maisonmargiela.com.

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PUT A PIN IN IT
New York Philharmonic cellist Claire Deokyong Kim wields her instrument in **Chanel**; select Chanel boutiques.

You have music, dance, and
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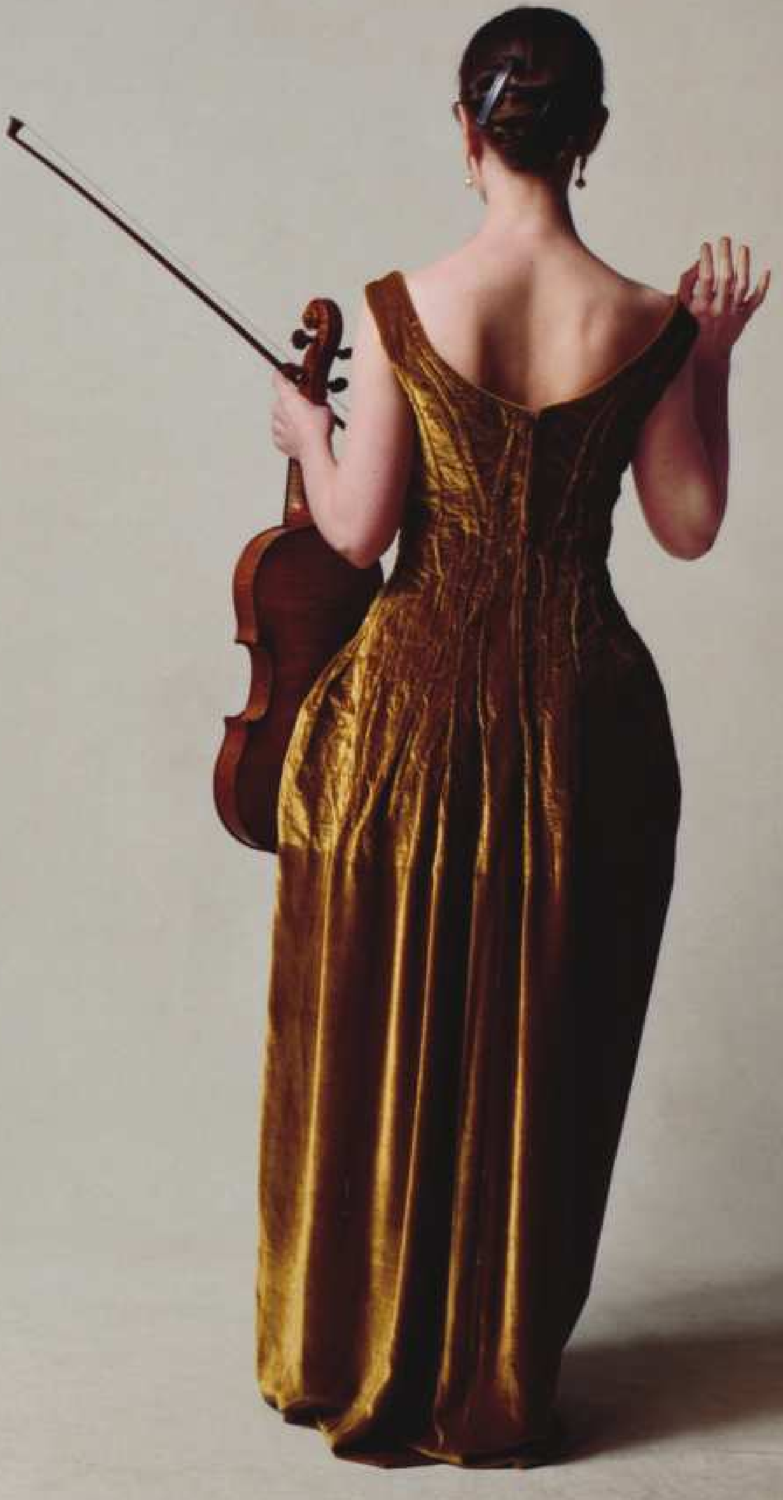
perience is multidimensional."



CODA
New York Philharmonic violist Leah Ferguson sticks out in a rich velvet **Fforme** dress; fforme.com. In this story: hair, Esther Langham; makeup, Aaron de Mey. Details, see In This Issue.

PRODUCED BY PARTNER FILMS. SET DESIGN: JULIA WAGNER.

All Wrapped Up

Because sometimes the coat *is* the outfit: Models Joan Smalls, Caroline Trentini, and Jessica Miller decamp to the bucolic British countryside in fall's finest outerwear. Photographed by Oliver Hadlee Pearch.

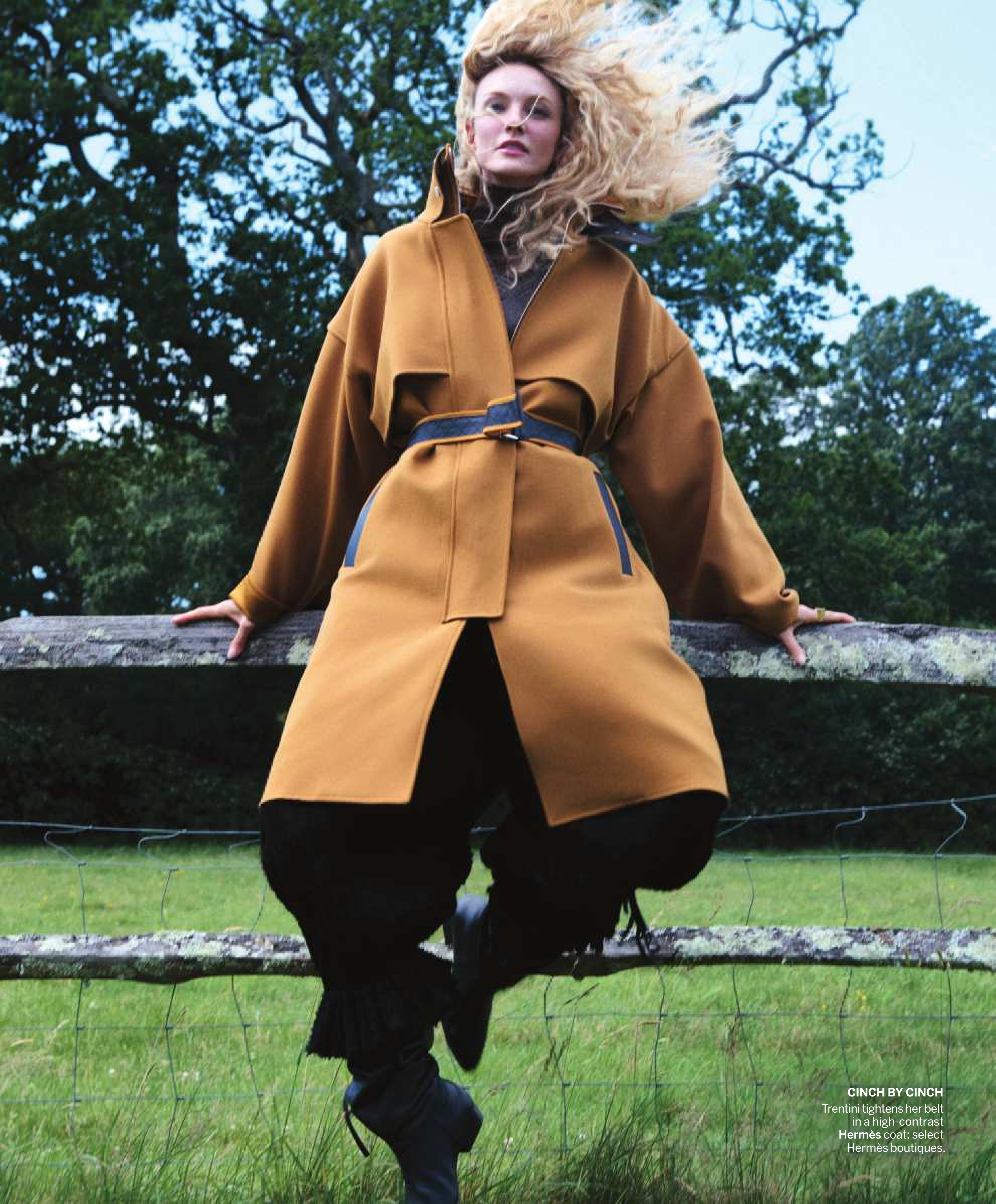
PLAYING THE FIELD
Smalls braces herself against the wind, keeping a tight lid on her shearling **Max Mara** coat and sweater; maxmara.com. **Louis Vuitton** cap.
Fashion Editor: Carlos Nazario.

GREEN AS GRASS
Smalls, Trentini, and Miller get cozy in the rolling hills. Smalls wears a **Victoria Beckham** coat and skirt. **Loro Piana** boots. Trentini bundles up in an **Akris** coat. Miller kicks back in a **Celine** trench and pants. OPPOSITE: It's a plaid world for Trentini, who mixes her patterned **Burberry** coats with pinstripe **Sacai** skirt-pants.

LOGGING OFF

Trentini makes herself at home in the crook of a felled tree. **Isabel Marant** coat and jacket; isabelmarant.com. **Ganni** trousers; ganni.com. **Hermès** boots; select Hermès boutiques. **Omega** watch; omegawatches.com.

POP CULTURE
Amid the amber waves, Miller and Trentini stand out in bright primary hues with their cherry and mustard **Alaïa** coats from Pieter Mulier's final collection; maison-alaia.com.

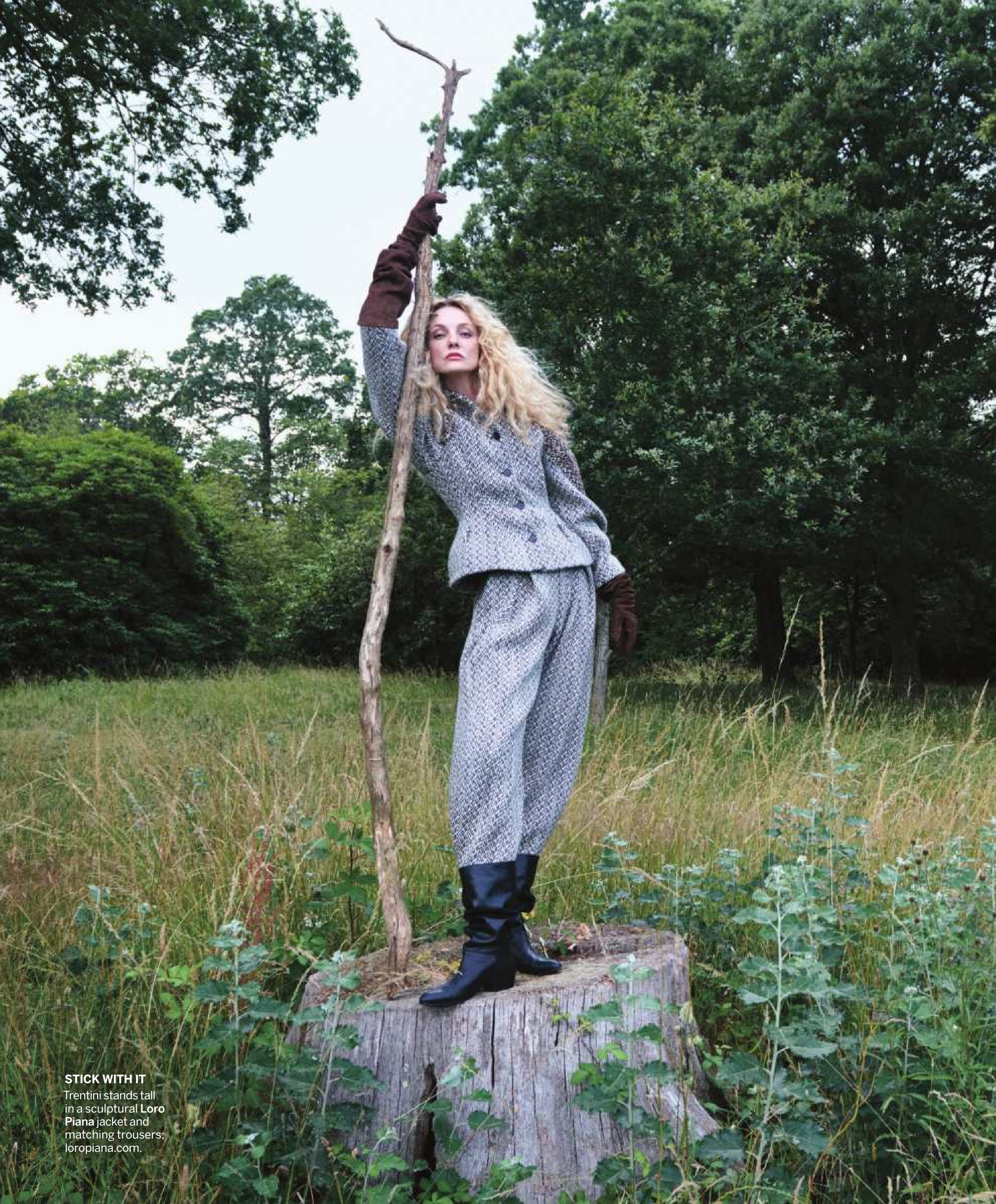


CINCH BY CINCH
Trentini tightens her belt in a high-contrast **Hermès** coat; select Hermès boutiques.

REST ASSURED

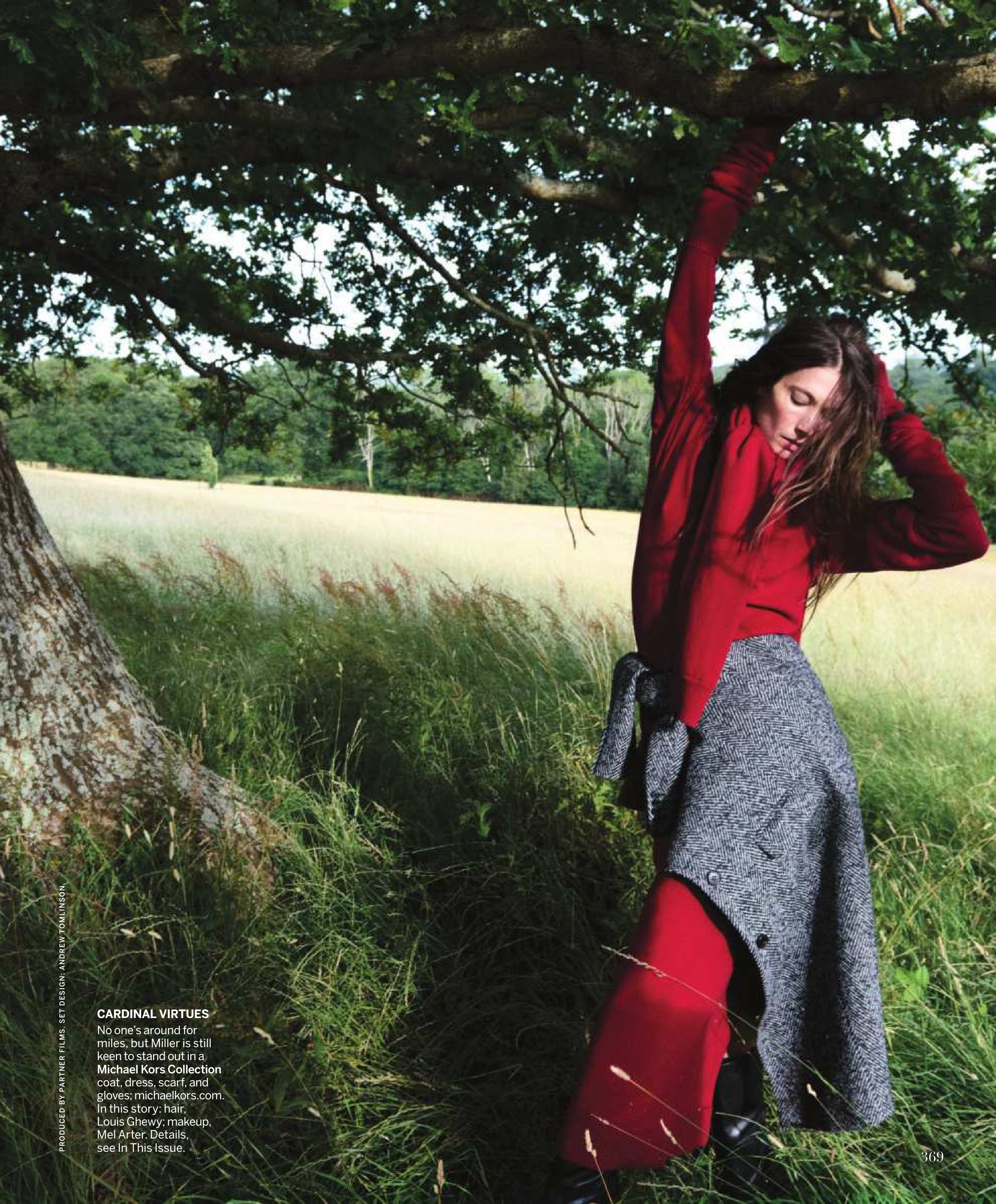
Trentini finds a moment of peaceful solitude in a shearling **Louis Vuitton** coat and hat; select Louis Vuitton boutiques. **Pomellato** rings. **Omega** watch; omegawatches.com.

BRANCH DRESSING
Miller, clad in plaid, cuts a relaxed yet jaunty figure in an **Emporio Armani** coat and trousers; armani.com.



STICK WITH IT
Trentini stands tall in a sculptural **Loro Piana** jacket and matching trousers; loropiana.com.

KNOCK ON WOOD
Smalls communes with nature in a **Bottega Veneta** coat and skirt; bottegaveneta.com.



CARDINAL VIRTUES
No one's around for miles, but Miller is still keen to stand out in a **Michael Kors Collection** coat, dress, scarf, and gloves; michaelkors.com. In this story: hair, Louis Ghewy; makeup, Mel Arter. Details, see In This Issue.

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LOEWE

JUST KIDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 292

the media for a decade, found it all kind of wonderful.

“Everyone’s being like, ‘This is so sexy.’ And I think that rocks,” Gerber says. “We’re clearly in one of those cycles right now where people are very, very, very thin. As someone who’s been thin most of my life, I’ve always been compared against my mom—like, What’s wrong with Kaia? I’m so jealous of my mom’s body. I would have loved to be born with boobs and a butt. People have always commented on my body, which is hard because I’m not always ready to comment on my own body, you know? I’ve had disordered eating in my life. People are like, ‘You look terrible,’ and it doesn’t exactly make you go, ‘Oh, good. Let me get over this mental illness then!’ Negativity has never saved someone’s life.”

Having had a string of famous, older boyfriends since she was a teenager, Gerber has grown a thick skin. She has been dating the actor and musician Lewis Pullman, the son of Bill Pullman, for nearly two years and calls it the healthiest and most adult relationship of her life. “There are so few things you get to protect as a famous person, and being defined by who you date when you’re 18 is something I find challenging,” she says. “I think I’ve been labeled in ways that are quite misogynistic: serial dater, slut, greedy. My mom is always like, Just don’t make the same mistake twice. And I’m pretty good at not. I think the ultimate goal is that your relationship doesn’t change you, that you’re not code switching between relationship, friendship, professional life. I would love to always feel like me, and in this relationship I’m having the pleasure of doing that.”

Gerber tends to speak with the wisdom of someone who has had to grow up both quickly and publicly. Right now she’s reading, for the second time, *The Body Keeps the Score,* the Dutch American psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk’s exploration of the relationship between trauma and attachment. Gerber volunteers at a trauma center where she hopes to be a thoughtful and informed presence rather than, as she puts it, “a shiny distraction.” She wishes she could be synonymous with her work, a trick some screen stars, such as her idol Gena Rowlands, managed. “To me that’s the ultimate flex. To me Mark Rylance is one of the greatest actors of all time, and he shows up at Cannes wearing, like, sandals and cargo shorts. I have sort of succumbed to the fact that that will never be in the cards for me.”

For a person who has always felt insecure—a fact she is reluctant to acknowledge because she knows that pretty people don’t get much sympathy for their soft spots—she has never been more comfortable looking at herself in the mirror. Gerber and Gere watched the pilot of *The Shards* together: fun for her, harrowing for him. (“I can’t watch myself,” he says. “It’s a whole thing.”) They have talked about what to expect from a knives-out viewing public that might think, Here is peak nepo baby.

“I’ve only ever been a nepo baby, and I’ve only ever benefited in my career from it,” Gerber says. “But I also find myself doing it to other nepo babies, thinking, like, Okay, show me why you deserve this job. I said to Homer—because the concept is daunting to him, having lived as an adult so far without that perception, whereas I sort of went through it when I wasn’t fully sentient—I said to him, ‘Homer, unfortunately with this show, it’s not like you’re just any unknown actor and people will judge you as an unknown actor. But what that’s done for me is make me want to work harder.’ ”

Gere has a stutter, which he has learned to mask following years of speech therapy in middle school and a decade of practice since then. In that premonitory moment when he feels he is about to get stuck on a word, he pivots. “What I do is, I’ll change the word at the last minute,” he explains, “so if I’m going to stutter on *rock,* I’ll switch it to *stone.* I’m constantly playing a game of cat and mouse with my own mind.” Despite the wish for a quiet life, for the monastery or the mountaintop, like Robert Mallory, Gere seems to have a talent for finding himself in the center of the image. He would never call it star quality, though others might.

“I’m a very self-critical guy who would like to believe that my career’s going well for all the wrong reasons,” he says. “But the more success I have, the harder it becomes to believe that. I think doubting yourself a little bit is very healthy, no matter how good you are. At anything. You should always be a little nervous if you’re doing something worthwhile.” □

ARYNA UNCHAINED

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She says that her mother told her that when she was a toddler, she would fall on the floor and bang her head until she got what she wanted. She was always fiery, it seems, and she recalls with some embarrassment the verbal firebombs she used to hurl at her parents. “I was very much a Taurus,” she explains. “Like, if I see a goal, I need to get it, and there is no other way. This is part of my personality that can drive me crazy, but it can also drive me into that real fight mode and help me play with passion. It’s two sides of the medal.”

Sabalenka arrived at a moment when the so-called Big Babe era of women’s tennis—a term coined by the sports journalist and former pro Mary Carillo to describe the power games of players such as Lindsay Davenport, Mary Pierce, and ultimately the Williams sisters—was in quiescence. Angelique Kerber, Simona Halep, and Ashleigh Barty—scrappier athletes with more versatile, all-court games—started winning majors, but then Sabalenka came in with her six-foot frame and booming ground strokes. With an intense on-court presence, that quick temper, and a natural imperiousness, she seemed, somehow, more Serena than Serena. Smirks and eye rolls, grunts that led chair umpires to accuse her of hindering play, smashed rackets, and tense exchanges with officials have marked her tenure on tour—and, for a while, her short fuse appeared to be undermining her results. Sabalenka began to develop a reputation for painful losses in high-stakes matches. She has won four Grand Slam finals—and lost four Grand Slam finals. “I was, like, under zero control,” she says. “I could lead the match, then be super crazy and let it go. I knew that I had a problem.”

Though she worked with a psychologist from the ages of 18 to 24—a transformative experience that endowed her with self-regulation techniques and, above all, a way of talking herself through fervid moments—Sabalenka would be the first to describe herself as a work in progress. While she was ranked number one for all 52 weeks of 2025, it was also a season studded with headline-grabbing incidents. In the final of the Australian Open in January, she could be seen smashing her racket on court just before the winner’s trophy was presented to Madison Keys. Following her loss to Coco Gauff in the final of the French Open in June, Sabalenka told reporters that the American “won the match not because she played incredible, just because I made all of those mistakes from… easy balls.” In October, at the Wuhan Open, on her way to losing a semifinal match to Jessica Pegula, she hurled her racket in frustration. It bounced up and nearly hit a ball kid, leading to a warning for “racket abuse” by the chair umpire.

Her pique has not been confined to defeats. In Miami this March, during the final that she went on to win over Gauff, a spectator shouted “out!” in the middle of a point, earning an admonition from the umpire. Sabalenka, frustrated, yelled “shut up!” into the crowd and received an obscenity warning: call and response in reverse. During the trophy presentation, she praised her opponent and then looked into the crowd and said, “Where you are, that lady that yelled, that hoped for the out? I shouldn’t have been that rude—but come on, you cannot do that. So let’s agree that we both were wrong. Sorry.”

There has long been more than a whiff of a double standard when it comes to expressed emotion in women’s tennis, and anachronistic notions about what is “ladylike” persist in fan forums and even among some commentators. (Serena Williams faced similar criticisms—for the volume of her shrieks, for the shape of her body, for her temper and her tone in defeat.) The internet has also taken a malevolent pleasure in imagining feuds between women players. Sabalenka and Gauff were quick to quell this fantasy when they teamed up for a TikTok video, dancing together in their tennis whites on Wimbledon’s Centre Court, a few weeks after the French Open controversy. By then, Sabalenka had already publicly apologized to Gauff for what had occurred in that press conference. To her credit, she excels at something Williams never mastered: the public mea culpa. And for every spectator whom she alienates, there is another who recognizes a prodigal daughter in those apologies and thinks, Here, among the famous and false, is a genuine human being.

Sabalenka is matter-of-fact about it all. “When you’re in the top five and you’re winning Grand Slams,” she says, by way of explanation, “it’s not okay to be okay with losing. That’s my mentality.”

Sabalenka met her best friend on the tour, Paula Badosa, at an exhibition match before the Indian Wells tournament in 2022. Known collectively by fans as Sabadosa, they have celebrated their shared love of dancing in numerous TikTok videos. “I’ve seen a big change in her,” Badosa says. “Three or four years ago, it was tougher for her to control her emotions. Aryna is always going to be a very intense person on-court. But she’s also really sensitive. She has a big, big heart. She jokes that she’s a tiger, and she has that tiger tattoo on her arm. But I always say off the court she’s a teddy bear. She’s very affectionate, and she takes care of her people.”

Though she has been accused of trying to apologize her way out of her peccadilloes, to spend time with Sabalenka is to experience the chasm between player and person. Face-to-face, she is light, relaxed, and self-deprecating, unguarded and reflective. “You have to accept that you’ve been wrong,” she says, then laughs. “And I’ve been wrong so many times.” But she pushes back against the idea that a fiery temper is definitionally bad. In fact, she *believes* in it. “When I was young, I would get really pissed with myself for getting emotional. Now I understand that it’s okay to throw the racket. It’s okay to yell something. It’s okay to go nuts if you feel like you’re holding too much in. Sometimes you just need to let it go. Yeah, sometimes it looks ugly and terrible, but I need it in order to keep my head in it.”

Sabalenka’s tremendous popularity suggests that fans agree with her that the ugly and terrible can make for thrilling tennis. She trails only Gauff in earnings from brand endorsements, with sponsorships that include Nike, the watchmaker Audemars Piguet, and, as of this January, Gucci. The venerable Italian house chooses its brand ambassadors carefully; in tennis, that has meant only Sabalenka and the men’s number one, Jannik Sinner. In March, she was part of an especially interesting front row at Gucci’s Milan Fashion Week show that included Shawn Mendes, Romeo Beckham, Donatella Versace, and the boyish Formula 1 driver Kimi Antonelli. Intensity, authenticity, humor, glamour—Sabalenka’s off-court success proves that these are as valuable as a great first serve.

“People know when you’re being your true self,” says Frangulis, her fiancé. “There’s always going to be something tricky in a match, because Aryna’s going to say what she feels. And she’s going to do the same on Instagram and TikTok. That makes her special. But I’ve always told her that, to stay composed, she has to try to attach herself to the facts, to what is actually happening, and not to what’s coming to her mind. It’s not about erasing those emotions. It’s about using them in her favor—making it one of her superpowers instead of her kryptonite.”

Big personalities have big admirers and big detractors, and Sabalenka is aware that she is not everyone’s favorite flavor. That’s okay. “With a lot of love and a lot of attention and a lot of success, there’s always gonna be people who judge you,” she says. “They judge your look, they judge your grunting, your nationality, even your private life, your choices.”

Perhaps the most stinging vitriol has surrounded her Belarusian identity in the wake of the war in Ukraine. Since its start, in 2022, Belarus has been Russia’s key ally and a launching pad for its incursions. Some fellow players have accused Sabalenka of outright supporting the war; others of not using her platform to condemn it more vigorously. Sabalenka has been clear that she does not support the war, or any war, and also that sport ought to transcend politics in its fundamental commitment to connection rather than division, competition rather than conflict.

“Not shaking hands—I respect that position,” she says, referring to the decision by some players, including the Ukrainian Elina Svitolina, not to shake hands at the net after matches with Russian and Belarusian athletes. “I know it’s not personal. They’re sending a message. But it was tough, the amount of hate I was receiving from people on tour. One coach went nuts on me, saying that I’m the one who’s throwing the bombs. It’s obvious that I want peace for everyone. I don’t want this war to happen. But I also think that sport is a platform and a place where we can come together, not fight against each other as if we’re having our own war. Get together, be together, show peace. For so long, Ukrainians and Belarusians were like brothers and sisters. We’re the same. We’re all tied close together. And now there’s a huge wall between us, and I don’t know if it’s ever going away.”

In 2019, when Sabalenka was 21, her father died suddenly of meningitis. It was November, the offseason, and she was training in Minsk. As she remembers it, on the day he fell ill, her mother called an ambulance, but the medics lowered his fever and kept him home. She called another ambulance the next day, with the same result. “I was like, let me fucking carry him to the hospital myself if the ambulance isn’t taking him,” Sabalenka recalls. “They took him on the third day, and it was too late. It was even harder for my mom. And I didn’t realize until later how much my sister suffered. We were both daddy’s little girls.”

Though she has gotten closer to her mother in recent years, her father had been the central pillar of her support system. She called him whenever she was struggling personally or professionally, and his words had a way of setting things right. When he died, only training took her mind off her grief. “People say that time helps, but in some ways I struggle more now because I know how much fun my dad would be having with my success,” she says. “Nowadays my fiancé will find me crying in bed in the evening because I’m watching Reels and there’s something about a father, or old times. The most sensitive videos for me are when I see people posting a family reaction to their kid athlete winning something, and I just imagine how my dad would react to me. There are so many fathers on tour, and when I see a healthy relationship and a proud dad, I think, Girl, just enjoy it, because you never know what’s coming. You’re so lucky.”

Not long before her father died, Sabalenka hired Jason Stacy as her fitness trainer. The title vastly underestimates his role on a team that is especially tightly knit, in a sport whose top players often describe their traveling teams as families. To Sabalenka, Stacy is, she says, “like a father.” The longest-serving member of a unit that spends 330 days of the year together and its elder statesman (he is just a bit older than Sabalenka’s father would be if he were alive), Stacy has been instrumental in her recovery from losses on and off the court. “I always tell her, don’t fight it, and don’t feed it,” he says of those losses. Stacy, who was homeless as a teenager before a transformative introduction to martial arts, has taught Sabalenka some of the fundamental precepts of Zen Buddhism. These include *Zanshin,* a relaxed awareness; *Mushin,* mental clarity; and *Tomaranu Kokoro,* a spirit that is always moving. “Aryna’s learned how emotions are information. These days she can take that information and process it better. It’s the progression from fighter to warrior. She was that young fighter, running off adrenaline. Warriors are calmer. They can zoom out and then zoom back in and refocus on the right thing.”

Sabalenka suffered another loss in March 2024, when her ex-boyfriend, the hockey player Konstantin Koltsov, died by apparent suicide in Miami. She was on the practice courts in Miami, the closest thing Sabalenka has to a home base, when police approached her with the news. “I was fighting with the cop—like, I couldn’t accept it,” she remembers. Again Sabalenka tried to immerse herself in her game. She began playing in the Miami Open days later but lost in the third round, smashing her racket and canceling her press conference.

It was around this time that Frangulis and Sabalenka were becoming a couple. They had first met the previous fall, in Dubai, when she signed a sponsorship deal with Oakberry. By the time they had dinner the next spring in Indian Wells, Frangulis says, they were somewhere “in between” business colleagues and romantic partners. They are both citizens of the world: The headquarters of Frangulis’s company is in Miami and the back office in São Paulo, while his main European office is in Madrid. Dating a professional athlete has its logistical complexities, but Frangulis says that nowadays he bases his travel around hers, and that works for them both.

On the day we speak, he has just returned to Rome from Corsica, where he watched French soccer club Le Mans FC, of which he is a part owner, play its last match of the season. The previous morning, Sabalenka suffered a surprise defeat in her third-round match at the Italian Open. “Aryna is very upset,” he says. “For me, it’s a matter of being around but also giving her the space to get her thinking straight. She’s a killer, she’s the best, but sometimes it takes her 24 hours to remember that. My goal is to do whatever she’s doing, but if she wants to spend the whole day in her hotel room, I tell her we can’t just stay here as if someone has died. So tonight, we’re going out for some pasta.”

Like many athletes, Sabalenka has certain rituals at every tournament. In Rome, one of those is the amatriciana at Taverna Trilussa in Trastevere, where she has been known to arrive by Lime scooter for dinner with her team. When life is rich outside the arena, it seems, the losses sting less.

This year’s clay and grass court seasons brought a string of frustrating defeats, including at the French Open and Wimbledon. Following the French, she went to Vienna, had some great meals, wandered through some art galleries, and did her best to be something other than a tennis player for a few days. After Wimbledon, she and Frangulis flew to Mykonos, where they hit the beach clubs and spent time on a boat. Sabalenka is sanguine and practical about the latest rough patch. "I'm not really trying to chase that feeling of confidence, which goes up and goes down," she tells me by phone from Europe. "It's more important to believe in yourself and your game every time you get on the court…. And this time I think I handled myself much better, even when things were going completely not the way I wanted."

There is a wedding to plan—Greece, summer of 2027, she's thinking. When the subject of marriage comes up, Sabalenka is probably not the first fiancée to peer down at her engagement ring with a look of wonder that life's cruel show can't overcloud.

"I see a little bit of my father in him, and I absolutely love it," she says of Frangulis. "You know, I would tell him, 'I'm a big girl, and my hand is big, and a small ring would look very… small.'" Fortunately, there is no rule against big, blinding baubles on the tennis court—even if they might lead to another hindrance call. "That's the whole idea—especially if you're playing a night match, and the lights are hitting it. Then it's, like, right in their eyes." □

INSIDE DEMNA'S GUCCIVERSE

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knew the movie, you know?" Demna tells me. "I knew Alessandro, and I knew Tom Ford from fashion TV when I was, like, 13…but to understand the brand, I had to know what Gucci stood for outside of those three things." Over the weeks that followed, he made visits to the Gucci archive, in Florence, with espionage-like cover. "I saw the whole world," he says. "Homeware. Chairs. Umbrellas. A roulette wheel. And on top of that, the most incredible collections." He shrugs. "I was seduced."

Demna proposed to Bellettini that he compile a presentation in which to assemble his thoughts. "I need to convince you and myself that we can do this," she recalls him saying. It was the holidays, and he and Gomez were in Los Angeles. "On the day I finished," Demna says, "I showed it to my husband." (Demna sometimes refers to Gomez as his "fashion therapist.")

"My husband looked and was like, 'It gives me a FOMO feeling—I want to *be* that or I want to *have* it,'" Demna recalls. That frame clicked. "I was like, *that's* what my vision of Gucci is—creating this FOMO," he says. "The chic, the elegance, the Italian-ness of it. The dolce vita, but in a nonchalant way. There's a bit of humor to it, but it's not sarcastic. It's a fun thing, quite punk, in a way—like, 'I like myself, and I don't care what other people think.' There's something daring about it—it's flamboyant. It's confident. You know who you are."

The Los Angeles fires started that night. Demna left with nothing but his passport and his laptop: He had not backed up his presentation. "I sent it to Kering, and I was like: This is my vision…. And if they don't like it, I might as well know that now."

But Bellettini understood what he put forward: a freedom possible only in a house whose history was rich in product. "What he was explaining as a liberation was the fact that the brand doesn't come from a couture maison," she recalls. "There isn't a Cristóbal Balenciaga, an Yves Saint Laurent, a Christian Dior, to whom you're always going to be compared." When Demna presented his plan to François-Henri Pinault, the chairman of Kering, he was pelted with questions. "François-Henri wanted to be *sure*," Bellettini says. "And Demna was so precise in his answers that he was like, 'Okay, done.'"

In general, Demna's creative day starts slowly—a self-protective nest of discipline which he says he learned from Marc Jacobs, for whom he worked at Louis Vuitton more than a decade ago. In Milan, he takes the morning for himself. He has coffee and a smoothie with his husband. He meditates. He cuddles his two Chihuahuas and takes them walking with Gomez. "We talk about stuff that isn't fashion," he says. "I want to have this moment which is about my family, my husband, and me. And us as a couple. And our life."

At noon, he reports for work at the office, from which point he is usually scheduled straight through to 8 p.m. He rarely takes more than a 15-minute break. "It's intense, but I love it, because when I'm in the flow of working, I'm quite fast in making decisions," he says. "We manage a lot for a brand this size in one day." In the evening, he returns home and cooks dinner with Gomez—or, rather, alongside Gomez, who maintains a different diet. ("He's gluten-free. I'm vegan," Demna says. "Sometimes it overlaps, but"—he smiles—"it's hard to be gluten-free in Italy.") In Los Angeles they go out for dinner most nights, but in Milan this "ritual," as Demna calls it, is their life.

"We cook, we watch stand-up comedy on YouTube, listen to music," he says. They go out for dinner once a week at most, and usually on the weekend, after walking through the city. "I don't really have a lot of social life in Milan," he says. "I'm always going to be this rebellious person, but now I live this Gucci life professionally." His rebellion, in the Gucci way, has taken on bourgeois hues.

We are drinking ginger-lemon kombucha at a banquette table in the Campbell Bar in New York's Grand Central Station. Demna is in the middle of a two-week stay in New York; after preparing two looks for the Met Gala, he is now preparing for his larger errand in town. In a few days' time, Gucci will show its cruise collection in the center of Times Square, and Demna has been roaming the city for research and inspiration.

"I'll go to vintage stores, bookstores. See some art, get some cultural impact," he says. The process is about both gathering images as references for his collections and buying vintage pieces to use as physical canvases, "raw material" that he can cut and pin. "It's very hard sometimes to start making a jacket from scratch, especially when it comes to tailoring and shapes," he explains. "I need to have material that has good details and good proportions that I can cut and Frankenstein into the shapes I want to get to."

Shape has been extensively on Demna's mind as he works on his September collection. After taking his deliberate process of understanding Gucci stage by stage—starting with the fundamentals of La Famiglia and progressing to the sexy Fordian club style of his first Milan show—he feels that he is ready to present a Gucci that draws on the history of the house but is his. In fashion terms, this means coming out with new silhouettes: particular configurations of form, proportion, and mood, which, like the boxy Chanel jacket or the Dior hourglass of a dress, will be recognizable as the signature of his vision for the brand.

"Personally, I'm in *need* of a defined Gucci silhouette, and in September I will dare myself to show it," he says, and signals for a second kombucha. "It's about centimeters, it really is," he says. "It's about proportion. And I want to do something that also I haven't done before, which"—he smiles—"limits the possibilities."

He started with the mood: "What is the feeling I want to give so a person can be like, 'I feel Gucci'?" In consultation with Gomez, acting as his fashion therapist, he began listing all the qualities that he wanted his new Gucci silhouette to project. Facing the blank page on his laptop one day, with his deadlines for the September runway drawing ever nearer, he wrote:

Sharp, Confident, Chic, Bold, Rich, Eccentric, Hot, Sexy, Cool.

"*Sharp* as in not wobbly, not round: There is no cocoon shape at Gucci," he explains. "*Sexy* and *hot:* They're not the same. You can be completely covered and feel hot, but you can't be sexy. For sexy, you need to show some body. Gucci needs to have both."

One by one, he worked through his words, using them to define what the silhouette was and wasn't. In the spring, he went to one of his favorite vintage men's tailoring shops, in Rome. "It has the most meticulous selection of jackets and coats in Italian men's tailoring—I half-emptied the store," he says. "We're using those pieces when I work the silhouette, in defining the shoulder line and the sleeve shape."

A few days later, I meet Demna in the 23rd Street studio where he is holding fittings for the New York show. The show's fashion concept expresses his mercantile turn. "I call it Gucci-Core," he tells me. "Like hard-core, but also the essence, the base, of the aesthetic"—in other words, "staples" that customers can reliably find in a Gucci shop.

"For example, this is a very important piece for me," he says, pulling from the rack a red women's double-breasted jacket, his version of the classic peacoat. "I was afraid to work on it, because I don't like peacoats: How could I make one that I really liked?" The answer to the question became a kind of key: If he could make a Gucci peacoat that he loved ("It's the fit, the proportions of the collar, the size and positioning of the buttons, the length"), then he could extend his point of view across worlds of merchandise.

The other key—and perhaps his greatest, if quietest, innovation at Gucci to date—concerned sizing. Traditionally, fashion is tailored to tall runway models and then graded up or down into standard sizes, often losing the proportional relationships crucial to a fit. "It doesn't consider the body type," Demna says. "If someone is shorter and more muscled, he's going to look like a dork." At Gucci, he is developing a wholly new sizing system so that the integrity of a look will hold whether you're tall and lean or short and thick. In the meantime, many cruise collection pieces exist in three different fits: a small, a medium, and what might be called a Demna fit—the baggy proportions that he himself would buy.

During fittings, Demna perches at a table at one end of the studio. An assistant brings him an energy bar and a bowl of nuts. A tall male model appears in a jacket, sunglasses, and flowing black pants.

"I'm not sure about this one," Demna says. He takes off the sunglasses, then walks over to a rack of pieces, assessing alternatives, and eventually emerges on a long coat. The problem with the jacket, he explains, was that it looked somehow implausible. "That's my big thing—to find the authenticity."

The night of the show is clear and cool: a New York City spring caught in the hourglass of Times Square. Smoke is piped in from the street corners, giving the Midtown canyons an eerie feel. By 8:10 p.m., guests have begun to arrive on Gucci's walled-off gray carpet. "Being at Gucci, he can dream as big as he wants, right?" Kardashian tells me. "He can say 'I want a show in Times Square' and pull it off."

Demna is with Gomez in a sushi restaurant on 47th Street that has been commandeered as the show's backstage. In one hand, he holds a Starbucks cup; in the other, a big red apple, as if in a nod to the city. The floor is marked with lineup tape for the models, and large screens near the entrance track street footage from cameras and drones. Demna draws close and peers at the footage in wonder for a moment and then, with Gomez, heads out into the cool air of the square.

Imaginary Gucci advertisements are playing across nearly 50 billboard-size screens and more than two dozen more at sidewalk level. Every celebrity arrival—from Mariah Carey in a crisp white Gucci coat to Lindsay Lohan in a black leather ensemble, Playboi Carti in shiny python trousers to EsDeeKid in a shimmering black jacket and baggy silver jeans (and his signature balaclava)—garners cheers from onlookers gathered on sidewalks and street corners. At a few minutes past nine, the screens all dim. Charlie Jones, again in the first look—this time bearing an apple in a deceptively simple black suit—traces a path through the crowd.

In the wee hours of the previous night, when Times Square was as quiet and as empty as it would ever be, the Gucci crew had assembled for their only rehearsal. Everybody wore earphones so as not to project the music, curated by Gomez, through the square. Now, with full sound and all 50 big screens tracing the runway movement with nervy panoptic attention, the effect is haunting. Suits of various power hues come down the runway. The red peacoat appears paired with black pants. There are bikers in leather, Venuses in shearling. Tom Brady swaggers in an asymmetric black jacket and matching trousers in leather. (For all the show's diversity in age and aspect, it continues to center on slender or gym-built bodies.) When Paris Hilton appears with a black fur-like coat slung over the shoulder of a sunflower yellow Gucci-patterned summer dress with a high lavallière neck—hot, not sexy—every phone in the audience seems to lift up.

For much of his career, Demna was known for shows that built toward an unsettled climax, but the effect here is the opposite. The sequence culminates as Cindy Crawford, at 60, dressed in a high shoulder-less dress of long black feathers, takes the final walk, as slowly and as grandly as *la passeggiata*. For a long, dilated moment, the entirety of Times Square is silent, as if holding its breath.

Later that night, the party reconvenes at the Gucci Mansion, a property with a courtyard on Madison Avenue reimagined as a center of the Gucci life across time. A jazz singer and quartet on the first floor scat-sings "It's De-Lovely." In a private karaoke room upstairs, guests are trying their luck at 50 Cent's "P.I.M.P." The basement is a billiards lounge in red—red carpet, red curtains, red walls. A fortune teller in a hideaway reads the future by lamplight.

Demna arrives after midnight and settles into the courtyard, dense with smokers and guests taking the night air. He is surrounded by well-wishers and in an expansive mood. "I'm relieved that this is done, because it was very complex," he says, still clutching his Starbucks cup—as if the evening, carried by its Gucci momentum, has borne him ceaselessly along. "But a lot of people told me that it was 12 minutes of forgetting about whatever they were thinking before." He smiles. "I love that." □

THE MATRIARCH

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of parenting a child through crisis. Her own parents—her American mother, Judith (known to listeners of Louis-Dreyfus's podcast, *Wiser Than Me*), and her French father, Gérard—divorced when she was young. Louis-Dreyfus understands, from both sides, how family shapes us, and she knows the stakes in the play couldn't be higher. Brooke's memoir "is like a murder," she tells me. "Polly sees it as a killing of what they have."

Fifteen years after its premiere at Lincoln Center, *Other Desert Cities* feels ever more acutely urgent. Its setting is 2004 America, a country still raw from the September 11 attacks and only one year into the Iraq War. References to anthrax, Donald Rumsfeld, and al-Qaida are peppered throughout like shrapnel. The fault lines that would fracture our politics had not fully formed; the Wyeths' mainstream conservatism would soon have little place in the culture. This was also the period before smartphones and social media—and the last moment when the code of silence on which Polly depends could be credibly maintained.

"All of the extraordinary seeds of that national tragedy are in this play," says Hickey. "But in an incredibly funny, familial way."

When assembling the cast, Hickey needed actors who could bring the world of more than two decades ago into the present. The result? "The Knicks lineup," he says. Joining Louis-Dreyfus are Ed Harris as Lyman, Allison Janney as Silda, Lily Rabe as Brooke, and, as Trip, Joe Keery (from *Stranger Things,* and also a popular musician performing under the stage name Djo).

"They recognize what a team sport this play is," Hickey says. That's also a quality Louis-Dreyfus recognized: that the play is an ensemble of vividly written characters, each deeply flawed and desperately human.

By the time Louis-Dreyfus and I meet, the cast has had two read-throughs—one before she had taken the part. What Hickey heard from her—warmth fused with steel, acerbic humor combined with a deep well of grief—told him everything he needed to know. He said, "Julia, my only note is: Say yes. Say yes. Jump into this."

Ed Harris speaks to me from Fort Worth, where he is on a break from shooting the Paramount+ show *Dutton Ranch.* It's been over six years since he last appeared on Broadway as Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird,* and he's ready for a return. "I need it for my sanity," he notes dryly.

What he loves about theater is the purity. "You come to the theater, you prepare, you do the show, and you go home. You're not sitting around for 12 hours to be in front of the camera for two minutes." Harris will bring an old-world masculine reticence to Lyman, whose wounds run deeper than they appear. "I think it's perhaps more difficult for him in a way than it is for Polly," he says. "I think it really affected him very deeply."

Meanwhile, Allison Janney's character, Silda, is a train wreck with a devastating quip. When we speak, Janney is in Italy, shooting the Netflix series *The Diplomat.* ("I had to buy another suitcase because I went a little crazy with the shopping here," she says.) Janney has been close friends with Hickey, who is also an actor, for 30 years—they last appeared onstage together in *Six Degrees of Separation,* playing husband and wife—and has long known Baitz, who wrote for *The West Wing,* on which she appeared for seven seasons.

Silda, with her outspokenness and history of addiction, has a different operating system than Polly—her intelligence is less controlling, more observational. Silda joins a long line of indelible Janney characters who use wit as a kind of scrutiny. "I take on these strong, powerful women and just have fun with them. This is heaven to me."

The play asks if family members can ever overcome old roles. Hickey mentions that he recently saw Joe Mantello's stunning new production of *Death of a Salesman* and recognized the shared DNA. "All the great family plays are the same," he says. "They're all *A Long Day's Journey Into Night.* They ask, Who is my dad? Who is my mom? And the answer: I'll never really know."

Louis-Dreyfus puts this idea even more intimately. “Siblings have their own very isolated experience: ‘You have different parents than I have,’ ” she says. “This is true in my family—and I say this as somebody with a lot of sisters. My husband’s family has lots of siblings. Our two kids have their own experience of us as parents.”

Before our lunch, she toured the Hudson Theater for the first time, standing on the stage, taking its measure. “It’s a great theater because it is intimate,” she says. “People aren’t super far away. It feels personal.” The intimacy is by design. The Wyeth family’s midcentury-modern Palm Springs house is a character itself. Scott Pask, the show’s designer and a great student of the era, is approaching the set like a boxing ring: This feels appropriate for a family whose native language is the verbal spar—the characters land their punches, then retreat.

The boxing ring metaphor appeals to Janney too: “We all take our rounds. ‘Ding, ding, ding—I’m down for the count on that exchange.’ ”

Until *Other Desert Cities* opens this fall, the cast, and the Wyeths, will be trying to find each other, learning how to spar, rehearsing their entrances and exits. In a play about memory, truth, storytelling, and what we choose to preserve, Janney’s instinct is straightforwardly human. “I cherish them,” she says of her fellow actors. “And I swear to God—to my mother—this time I will journal every day, because I want to remember it.” □

FAMILY TIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 337

charismatic leader, she creates something that could be seen as harmonious with the institutional houses.”

“For sure,” says Piccioli, “she is the future.”

Fast fashion is not a term Marta uses. She prefers *flexible.* Almost everything Zara makes travels through its distribution centers in La Coruña, which allows them to be agile. “I don’t think the company would be what it is if we hadn’t stayed in La Coruña,” Marta says. Having spawned an industry built on speed, the company’s leaders say they now aim to be at the forefront of resolving some of its repercussions. Marta tells me that Inditex is committed to improving the social and environmental conditions of its workers, and she is keen to lead the charge on sustainability and aim for net-zero emissions by 2040. Hakan Karaosman, an expert on social sustainability in fashion supply chains, points out that while Inditex is currently stronger on its water footprint than it is on social issues, it is “really innovative with supply chain design, because they established nearshoring.”

“Our business is very demand-oriented,” Marta says. “The key is to keep stock levels very low and leftovers to a minimum. There are less than 1 percent unsold products—we don’t do big shipments that don’t work and that we have to store in a warehouse. Even if others want to define it as fast fashion, our business model itself may be the most sustainable thing we have.” In 2022 they launched Zara Pre-owned, a considered platform that makes it easy for you to repair, resell, or donate your Zara clothes.

Galliano, who calls his two-year project for Zara a “reauthoring” of garments from its archive, admits that his initial reaction, when Marta asked if he might work with Zara, was “No way.” His reservations were probably “the same as everyone’s,” he guesses, based on “ill-formed or secondhand news.” By the time he’d done the tour of Inditex and seen the gallery of sustainable fabrics, he’d changed his view. “There’s a couple of fabrics that every couturier uses—silk chiffon, organza. They said, ‘Oh no, you can’t use that—they’re highly flammable. Now, you *can* use this one.’ They’re so on it.”

Marta opened her foundation by accident. “Peter Lindbergh was our wedding photographer and a personal friend,” she says. “He had curated an exhibition to be shown in Düsseldorf, and he never got to see it. [Lindbergh died in 2019.] When I saw that they were due to open the show there, I spoke to his son Ben and said that I’d love to do an exhibition of Peter’s work in La Coruña. It was all for Peter.”

She found a cement silo in La Coruña’s port that had been empty for 20 years and commissioned a local architect, Elsa Urquijo, to transform it. Now it houses an elegant fountain looking out to the sea, a sequence of monumental exhibition spaces, and an extraordinary spiral-shaped bookshop. The foundation produces a catalog under the MOP imprint for every exhibition—the day I went it was Annie Leibovitz; that was followed by Paolo Roversi—they host talks and book signings, and they give scholarships to four Galician photography students every year to enable them to study abroad.

In this way, Marta, ever proud of the city and the region where she grew up, has made La Coruña and Galicia something of a destination. But what strikes me most is how personal all of this is to her: fashion, photography, family, friends. She tells me about a day she spent in Paris with Lindbergh and the Lanvin designer Alber Elbaz, both now departed. “I have a photo of that day that I think of with a lot of affection,” she says.

“We always talk about fashion as if it were something frivolous, but I think it’s very human,” Marta suggests. “Fashion is present in the lives of millions of people every day. It’s how we present ourselves to the world. It sustains a lot of creativity and requires a lot of sensitivity. And it can be wonderful if we do it well.” □

AHEAD OF THE BEAT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 341

as a *Jeopardy!* clue. Bernstein understood that classical music needed an evangelist and a face; it’s Dudamel’s charisma—not his knack for interpreting Chopin—that compels a lunch table of high school students to look up from their sandwiches when he passes them at Lincoln Center during the photo shoot for this profile and shriek. His signature hair helps too. (He confirms he has never used a gel or mousse, but he does make an effort to patronize salons that are familiar with its texture. Once, in Sweden—land of the tall and towheaded—a hairdresser refused to touch a single strand. “I think he saw an alien,” Dudamel says.)

Dudamel is humble, but not blind. “Artists have an ego, and it’s natural,” he says a few days later. He and I are talking about the perils and paradise of Los Angeles, where stars and their self-regard can run wild. Dudamel inherited his mentor Abreu’s conviction that music can build bridges and illuminate a better world. “What happens in an orchestra is fascinating,” he says. “Different instruments, different cultures, different visions. Different people with different political views. This is the thing we need in the world.”

Dudamel’s resolute optimism has, at times, looked to his critics like willful blindness. In years past, he faced sharp criticism for continuing to work in Venezuela as its then president Nicolás Maduro suppressed dissent and plunged the population into a series of humanitarian crises. Despite functioning as one of its most prominent, if unofficial, cultural ambassadors, Dudamel remained silent while Venezuela descended into chaos. He resisted the pressure until 2017, when he did at last break with the regime in an op-ed denouncing its antidemocratic crackdown. The government then made clear that he should not visit. When Abreu died in 2018, Dudamel missed the funeral. Even now, he resists commenting on Venezuela’s political situation, deflecting to say that his focus is on El Sistema, which relies on government funding, and humanitarian aid. In August, his final performance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic will be a benefit concert for earthquake relief. “There’s still a lot of hope there,” he says.

He’s not naive, just disciplined and decades older than he was when classical music greeted him as a savior. His riot of curls has started to gray. Sometimes, it falls to his teenage son, Martín, to introduce him to new music. (Martín’s mother is Dudamel’s ex-wife, Eloísa Maturén; he married the Spanish actress and director María Valverde in 2017.) It occurs to Dudamel in the midst of our conversation at the United Palace that he should be exercising more diligently, the better to keep up with his frantic pace. More than once, his emphatic gesticulating has caused tennis elbow.

With perspective, he thinks more now about where orchestral music is headed. “We have to break the idea that classical music is not connected with the present,” he says. He can’t resist noting that Timothée Chalamet—who overshadowed his own Oscars campaign last year when he said that he didn’t want the film business to become something “no one cares about anymore”—was in the audience when Dudamel brought the LA Phil to Coachella. “It’s important to show that classical music, ballet, all of these art forms are alive,” he says with a grin. “It’s our responsibility as a new generation of artists to understand that we cannot be lazy.”

Change is inevitable, even when it’s hard. He feels this as he prepares to wrap up his long goodbye to Los Angeles, where he has made an incredible number of friends and collaborated with several of them, including Natalie Portman, the director Alejandro González Iñárritu, the chef and philanthropist José Andrés, and Bradley Cooper and Cate Blanchett—each played conductors in *Maestro* and *Tár*, respectively. Blanchett tells me that she has "never been in the presence of an artist who leads with such joy, such love." He will miss LA, although pieces of it—and people from it—are coming with him. He and his wife have been renting an apartment on the Upper West Side and are planning to remain near Lincoln Center. Julie Andrews laughs when she tells me that she just relocated from Los Angeles to Sag Harbor, New York. Not for Dudamel, she assures me, but it does mean that she will still be able to see him in concert.

When I wonder whether it's difficult to acclimate to New York's fitful weather after decades in temperate LA and tropical Caracas, he thinks for a second and then smiles. Dudamel is attuned to a different kind of atmosphere. Amid one of last winter's blizzards, he sought cover at Tarnopolsky's house, where the president and CEO was at the stove, cooking. "Yes, it was snowing, but it was so warm inside." □

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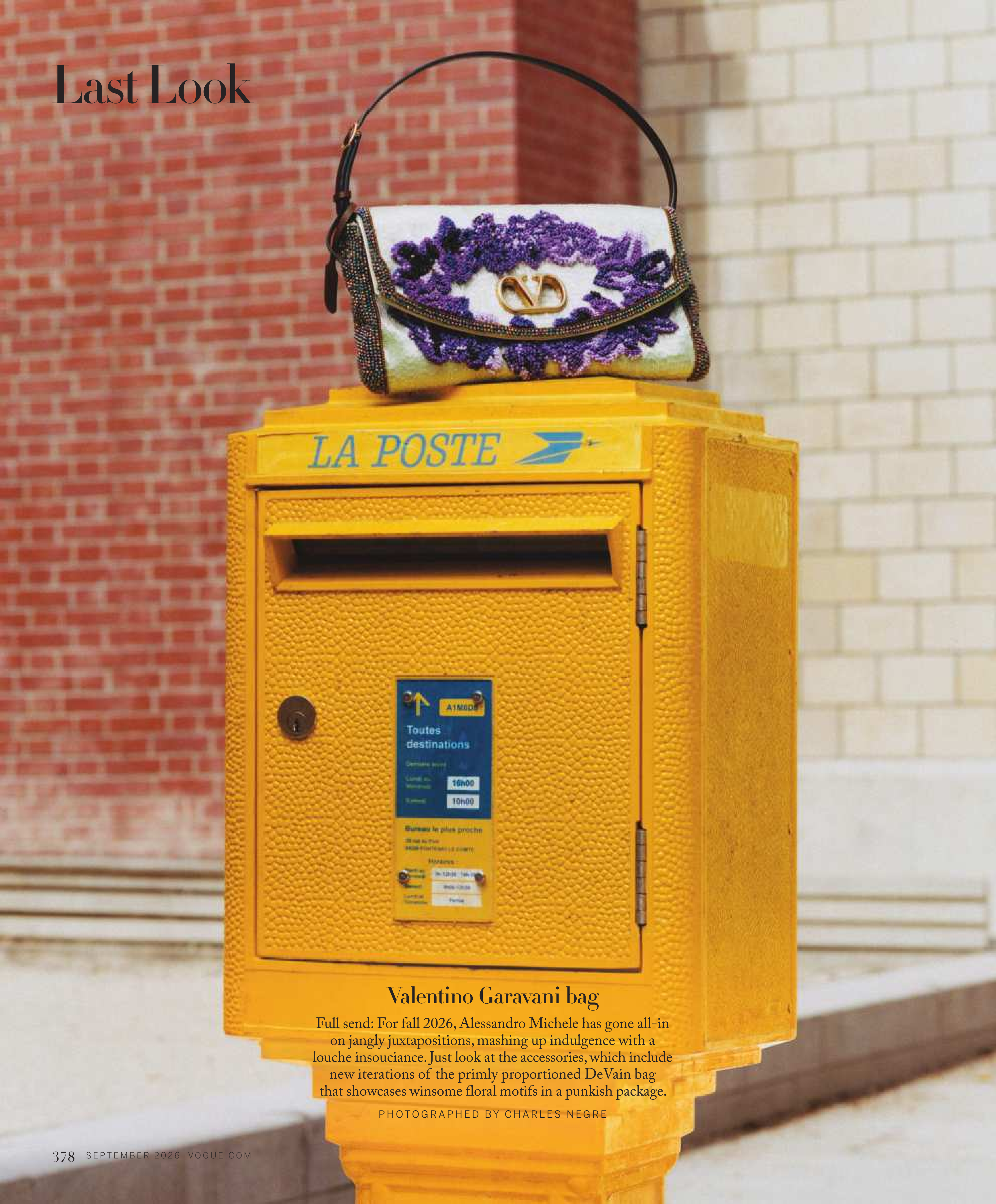
Last Look


LA POSTE
Toutes destinations
16h00
10h00
Bureau le plus proche
Horaires

Valentino Garavani bag

Full send: For fall 2026, Alessandro Michele has gone all-in on jangly juxtapositions, mashing up indulgence with a louche insouciance. Just look at the accessories, which include new iterations of the primly proportioned DeVain bag that showcases winsome floral motifs in a punkish package.

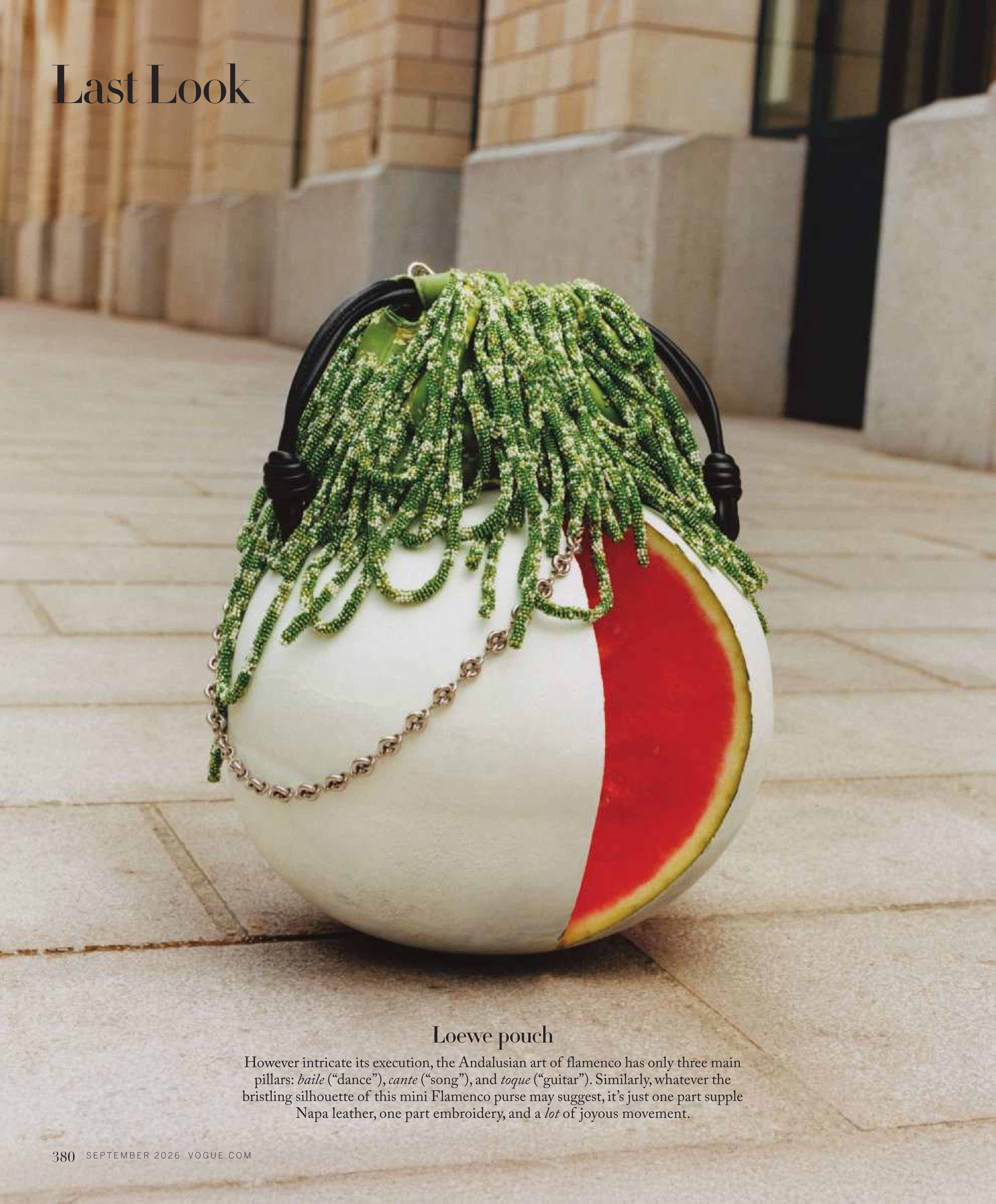
PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHARLES NEGRE

BVLGARI

SERPENTI INFINITO

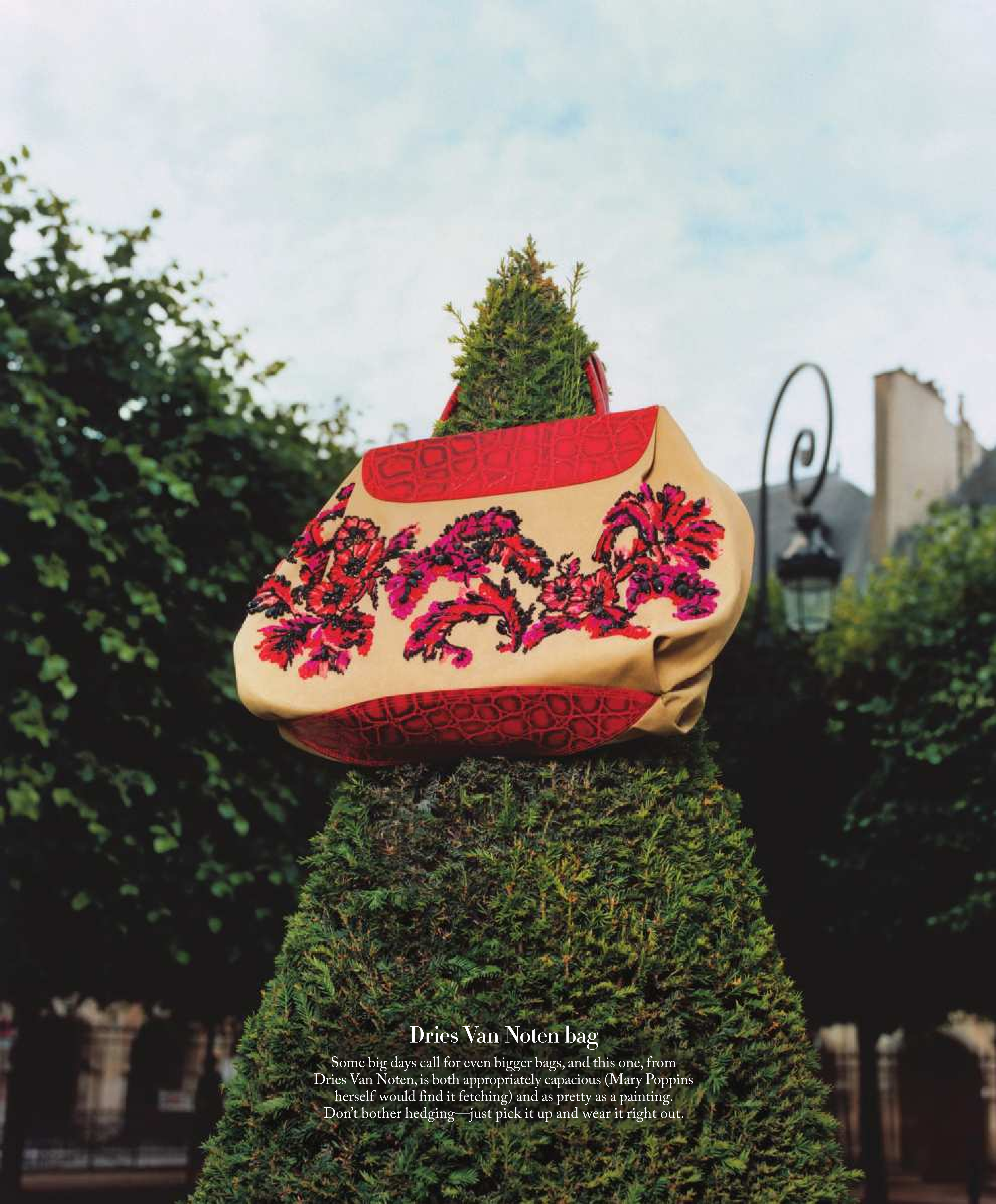
NEW YORK

Last Look



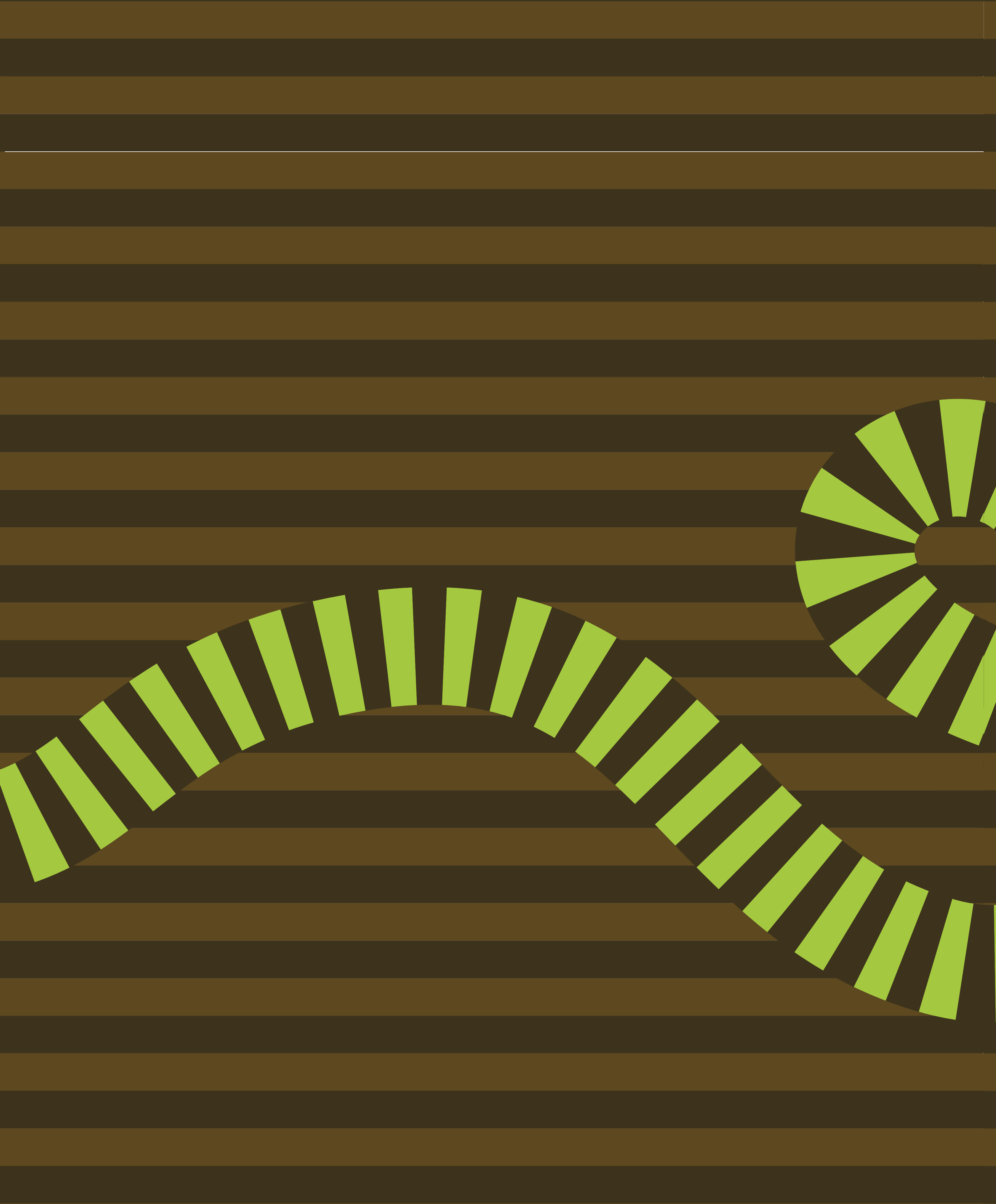
Loewe pouch

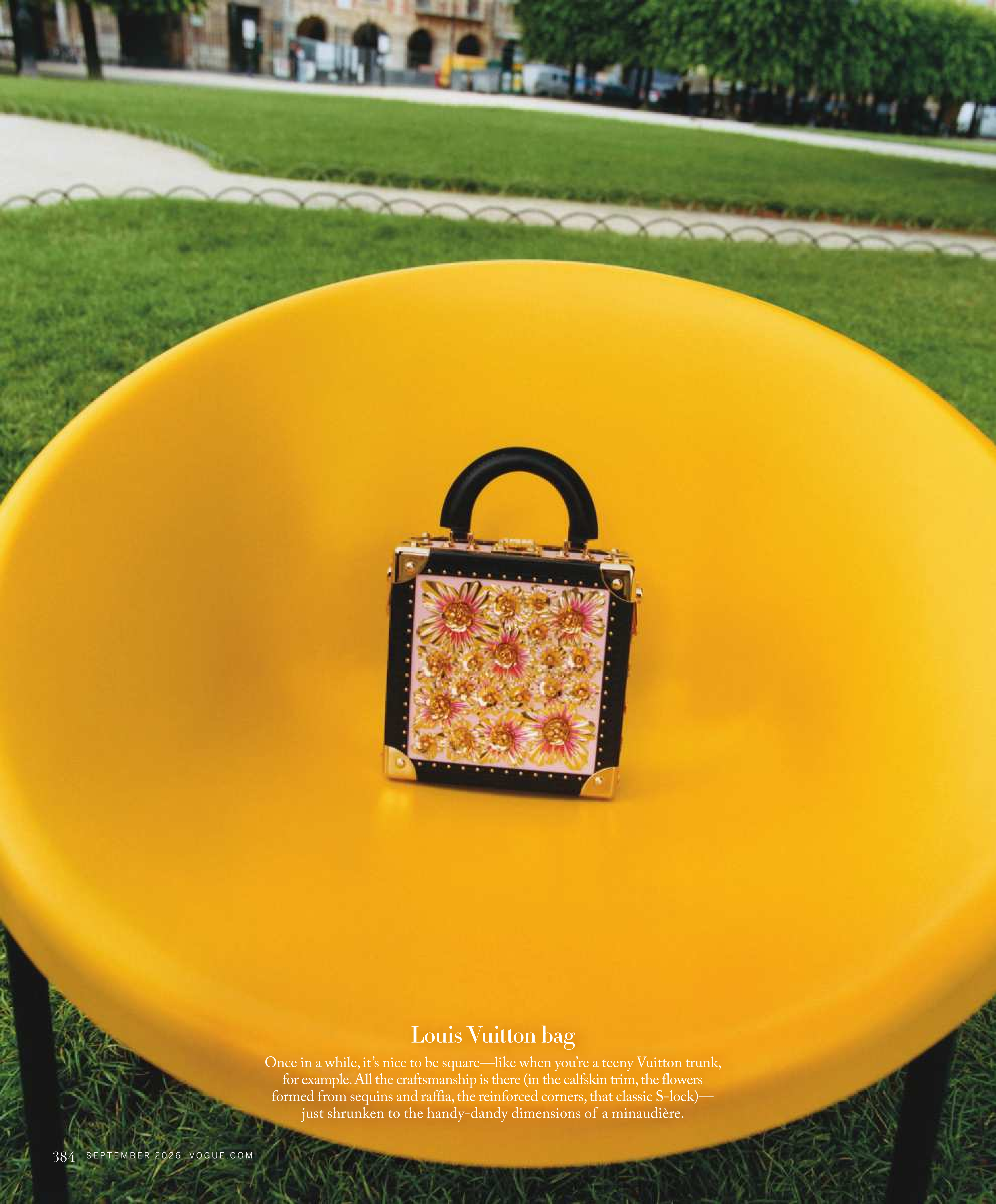
However intricate its execution, the Andalusian art of flamenco has only three main pillars: *baile* ("dance"), *cante* ("song"), and *toque* ("guitar"). Similarly, whatever the bristling silhouette of this mini Flamenco purse may suggest, it's just one part supple Napa leather, one part embroidery, and a *lot* of joyous movement.



Dries Van Noten bag

Some big days call for even bigger bags, and this one, from Dries Van Noten, is both appropriately capacious (Mary Poppins herself would find it fetching) and as pretty as a painting. Don't bother hedging—just pick it up and wear it right out.

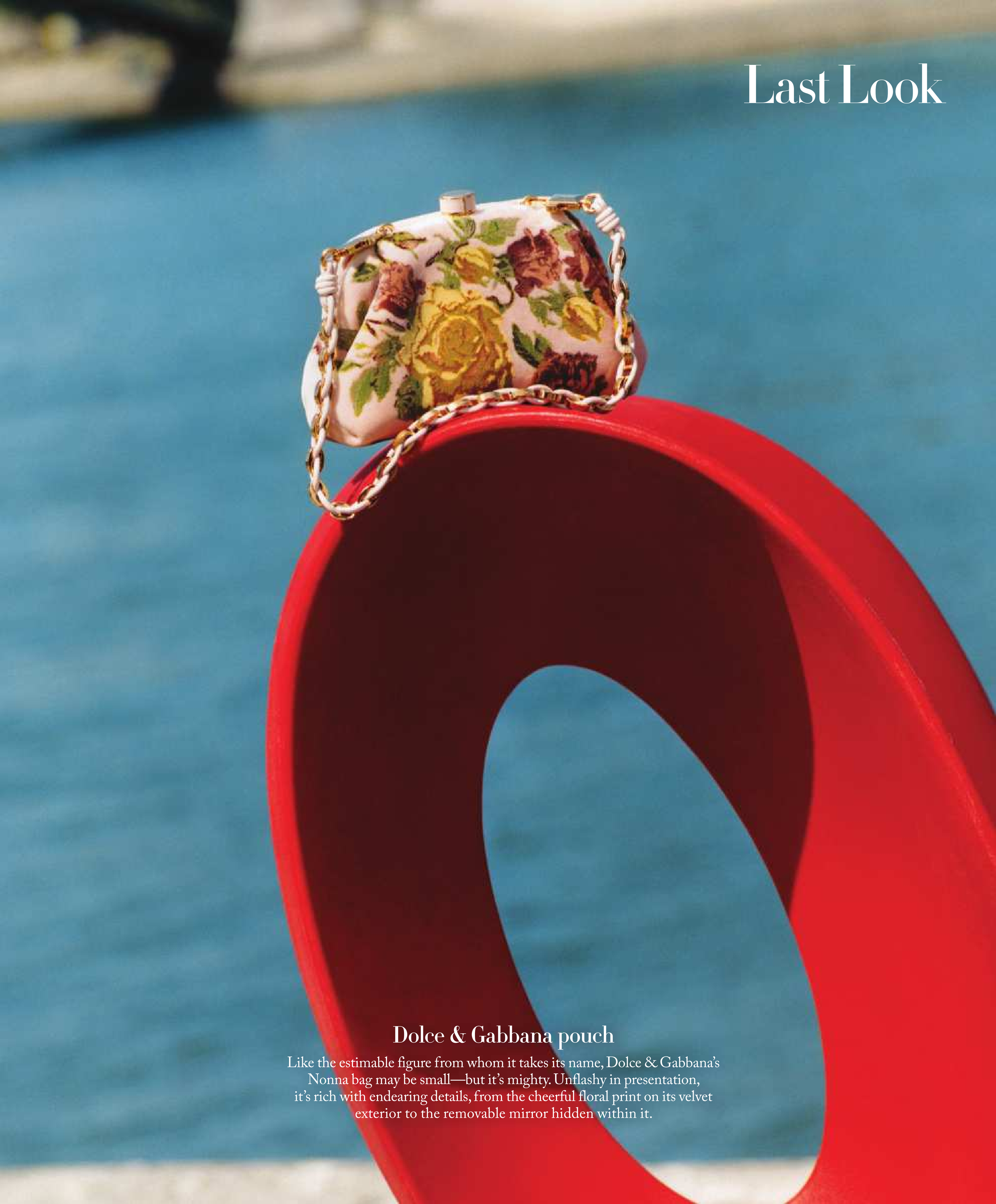




Louis Vuitton bag

Once in a while, it's nice to be square—like when you're a teeny Vuitton trunk, for example. All the craftsmanship is there (in the calfskin trim, the flowers formed from sequins and raffia, the reinforced corners, that classic S-lock)—just shrunken to the handy-dandy dimensions of a minaudière.

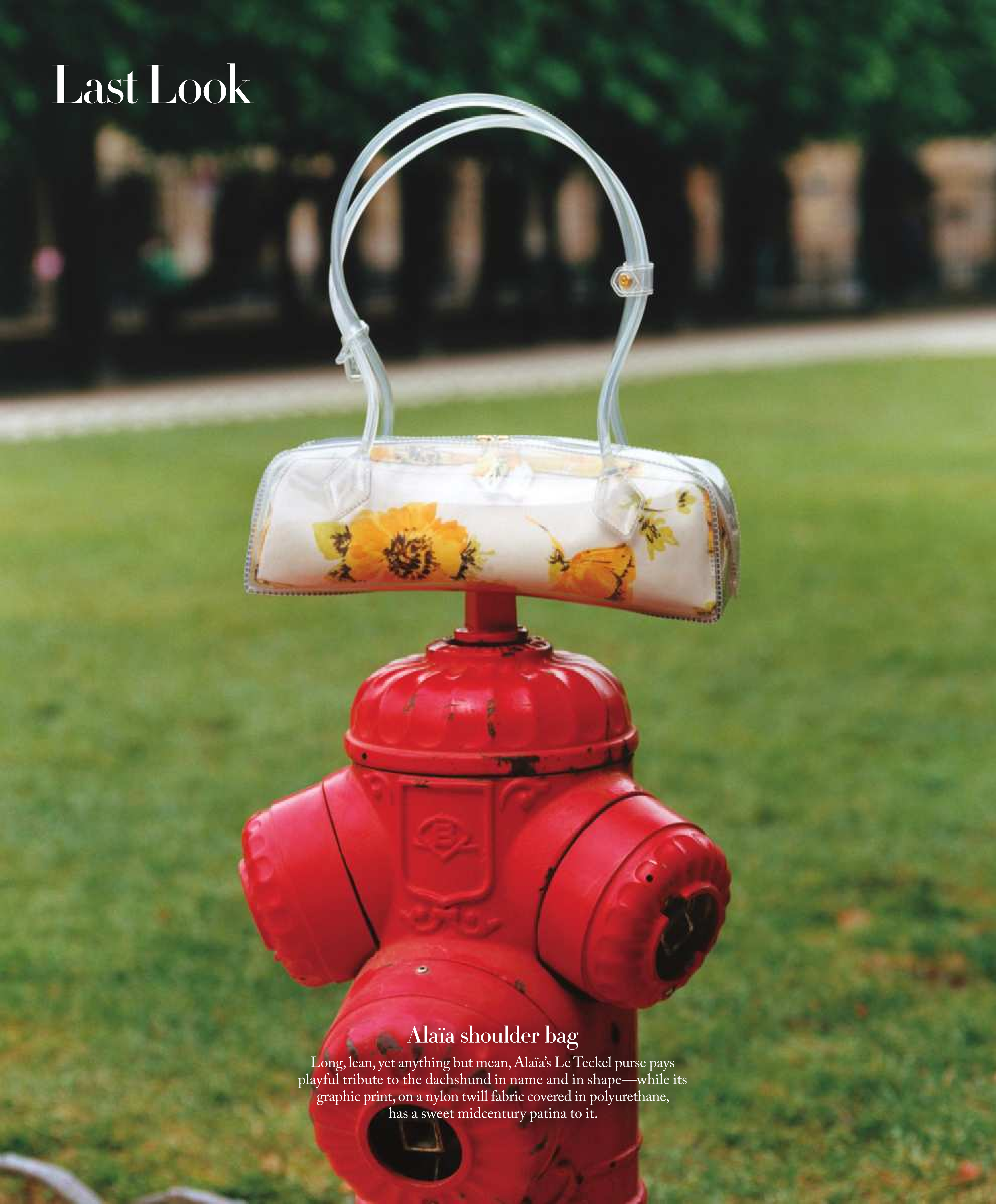
Last Look



Dolce & Gabbana pouch

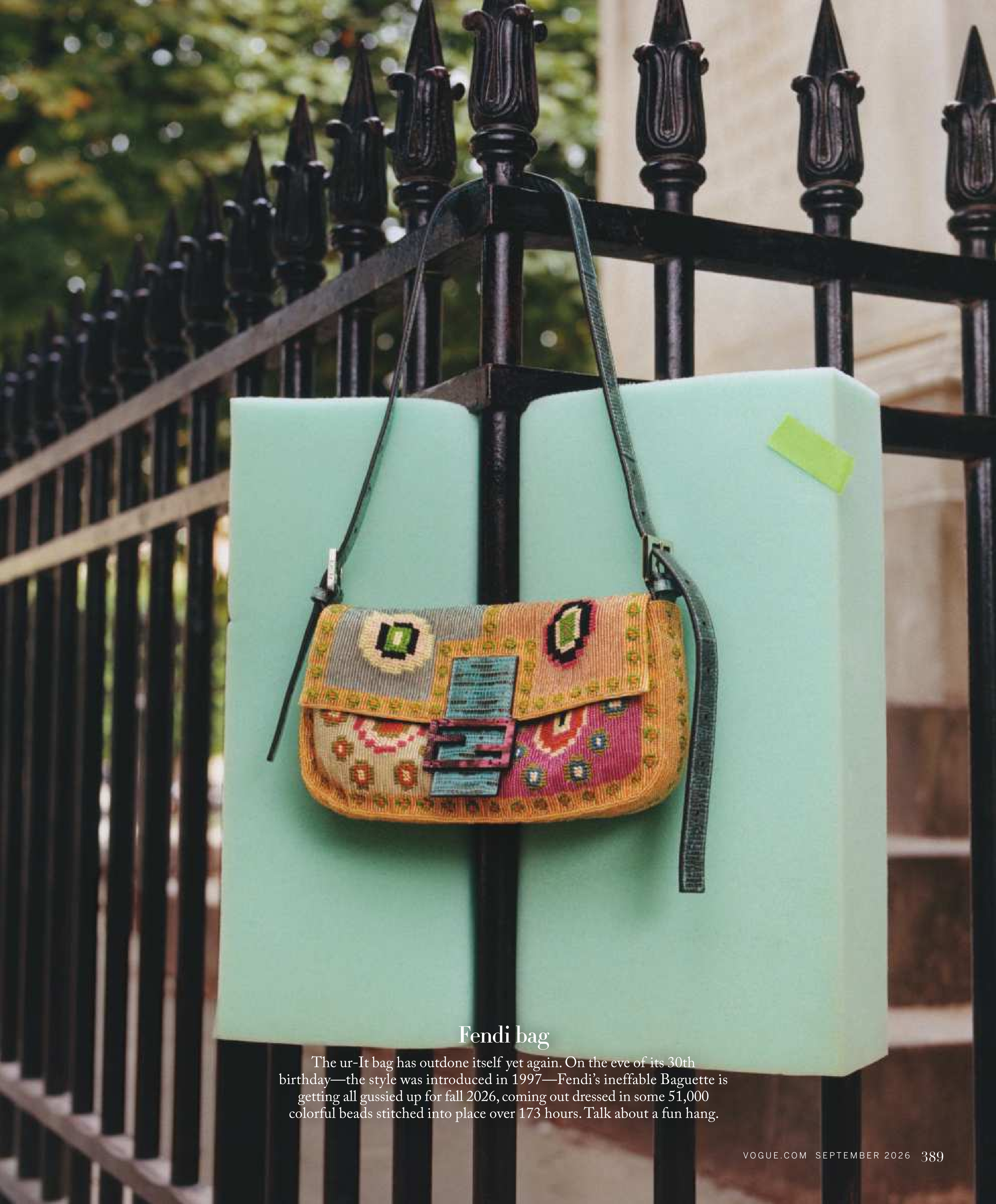
Like the estimable figure from whom it takes its name, Dolce & Gabbana's Nonna bag may be small—but it's mighty. Unflashy in presentation, it's rich with endearing details, from the cheerful floral print on its velvet exterior to the removable mirror hidden within it.

Last Look



Alaïa shoulder bag

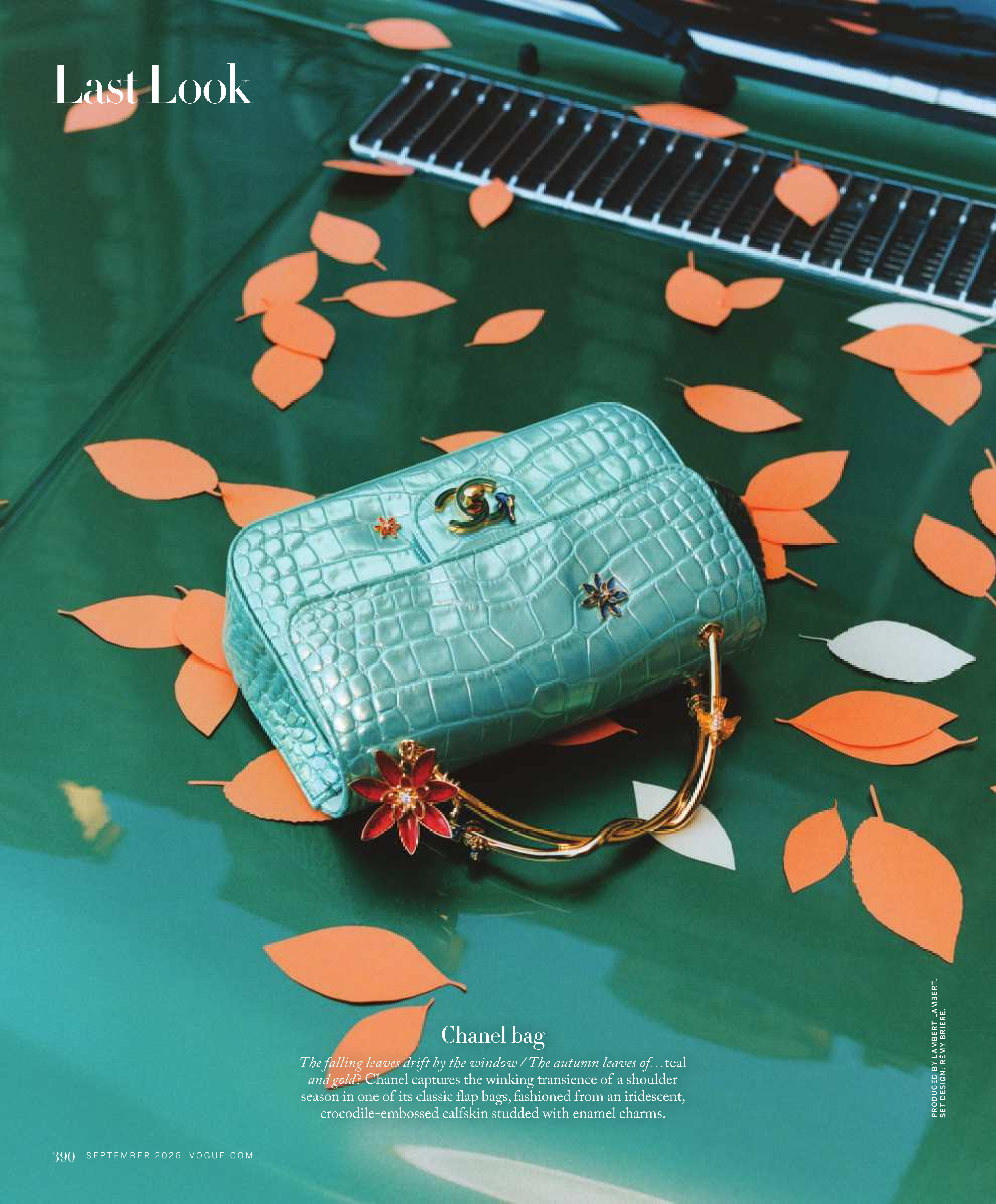
Long, lean, yet anything but mean, Alaïa's Le Teckel purse pays playful tribute to the dachshund in name and in shape—while its graphic print, on a nylon twill fabric covered in polyurethane, has a sweet midcentury patina to it.



Fendi bag

The ur-It bag has outdone itself yet again. On the eve of its 30th birthday—the style was introduced in 1997—Fendi's ineffable Baguette is getting all gussied up for fall 2026, coming out dressed in some 51,000 colorful beads stitched into place over 173 hours. Talk about a fun hang.

Last Look



Chanel bag

The falling leaves drift by the window / The autumn leaves of…teal *and gold*? Chanel captures the winking transience of a shoulder season in one of its classic flap bags, fashioned from an iridescent, crocodile-embossed calfskin studded with enamel charms.

PRODUCED BY LAMBERT LAMBERT.
SET DESIGN: RÉMY BRIERE.

BVLGARI

SERPENTI INFINITO

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 10 — SEPTEMBER 20

THE HIGH LINE

Dior